

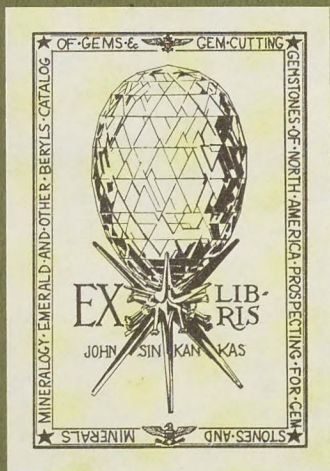


**Marie Antoinette**  
and  
**The Diamond Necklace**

BY  
**F. DE ALBINI**

*CHEAP EDITION*



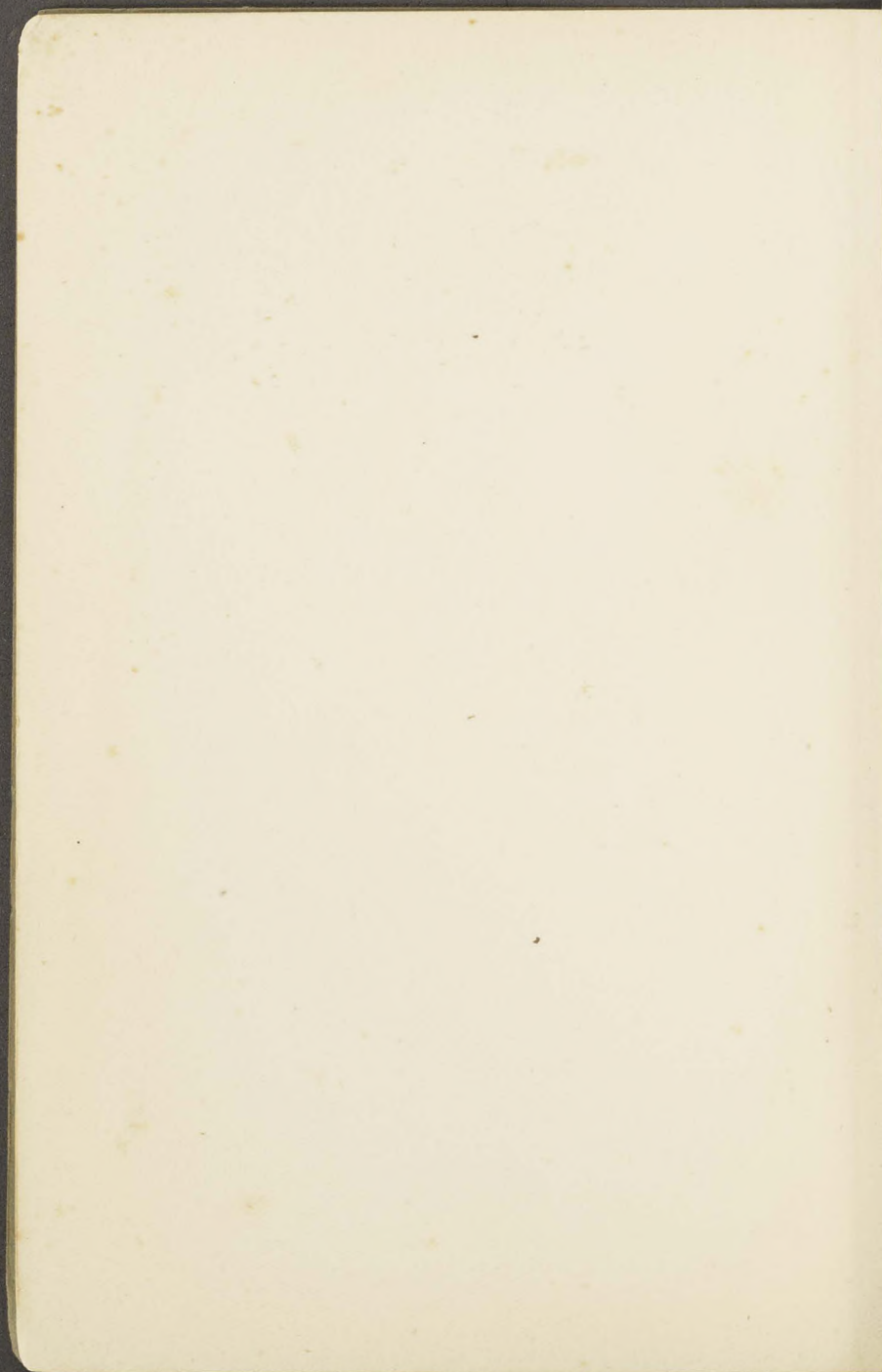




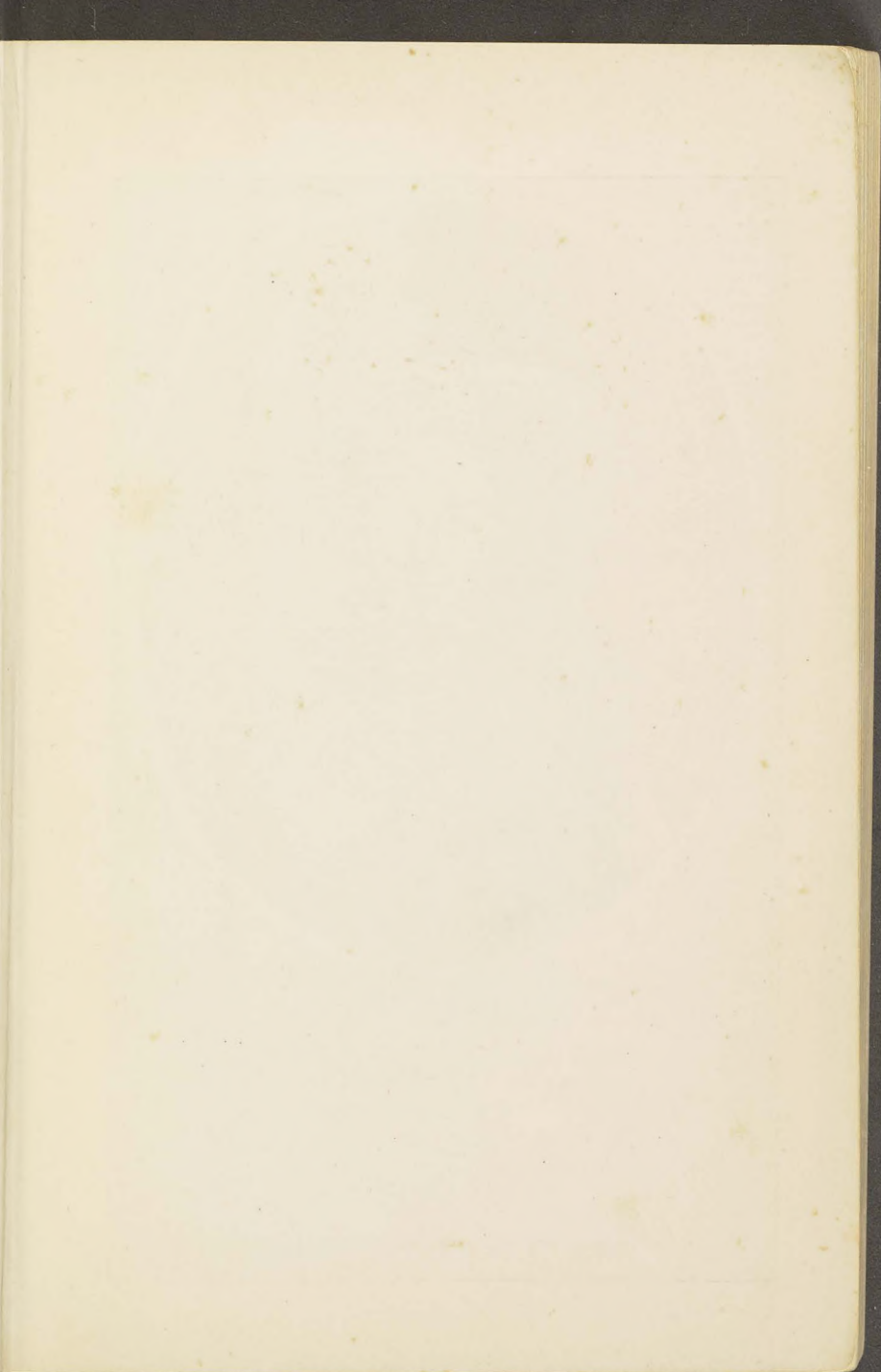
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MARIE ANTOINETTE  
AND  
THE DIAMOND NECKLACE

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MARIE ANTOINETTE

*Archid<sup>re</sup> d'Autriche, reine de France*

*Née à Vienne le 2 Novembre, 1755.*

*Mariée à Versailles, le 16. Mai 1770.*

*Décapitée le 25 Octobre 1793.*



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"Audi alteram partem"

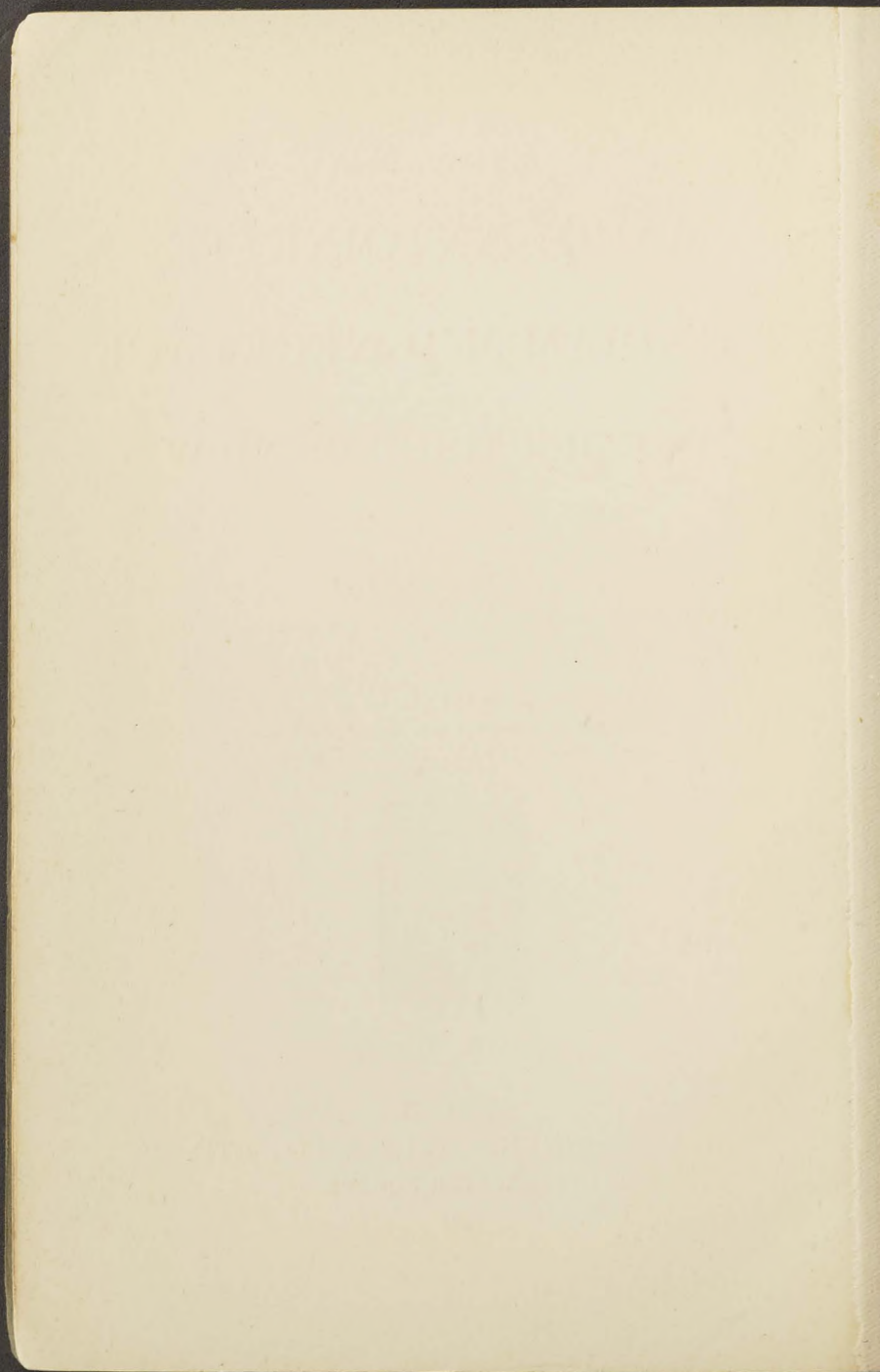
MARIE ANTOINETTE  
AND  
THE DIAMOND NECKLACE  
FROM  
ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW

BY  
F. DE ALBINI  
(MAJOR F. S. DAUBENEY, LATE OF THE 55TH AND 44TH FOOT)

"Le devoir de l'histoire est de ne rien  
adopter légèrement; son devoir aussi est  
de ne rien taire." *L. Blanc*



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1903





## P R E F A C E.

THE interest shown in this characteristic episode of an epoch fraught with surprises does not seem anywise to diminish; on the contrary the subject still appears to stimulate curiosity.

No opportunity, however, has been offered the general public for forming any unbiassed opinion. To do so, both sides of the question must be examined and canvassed dispassionately, whereas we have hitherto been treated "ad nauseam," to a sort of stereotyped account of the affair, whence any embarrassing details, tending to disturb its harmonious context, have been eliminated, or kept carefully in the background.

The judicial tribunal in France which took cognizance of the intrigue was, as we well know, scandalously corrupt, and the trial resulted in a miscarriage of justice—as admitted. In short neither was equity satisfied nor the truth fathomed.

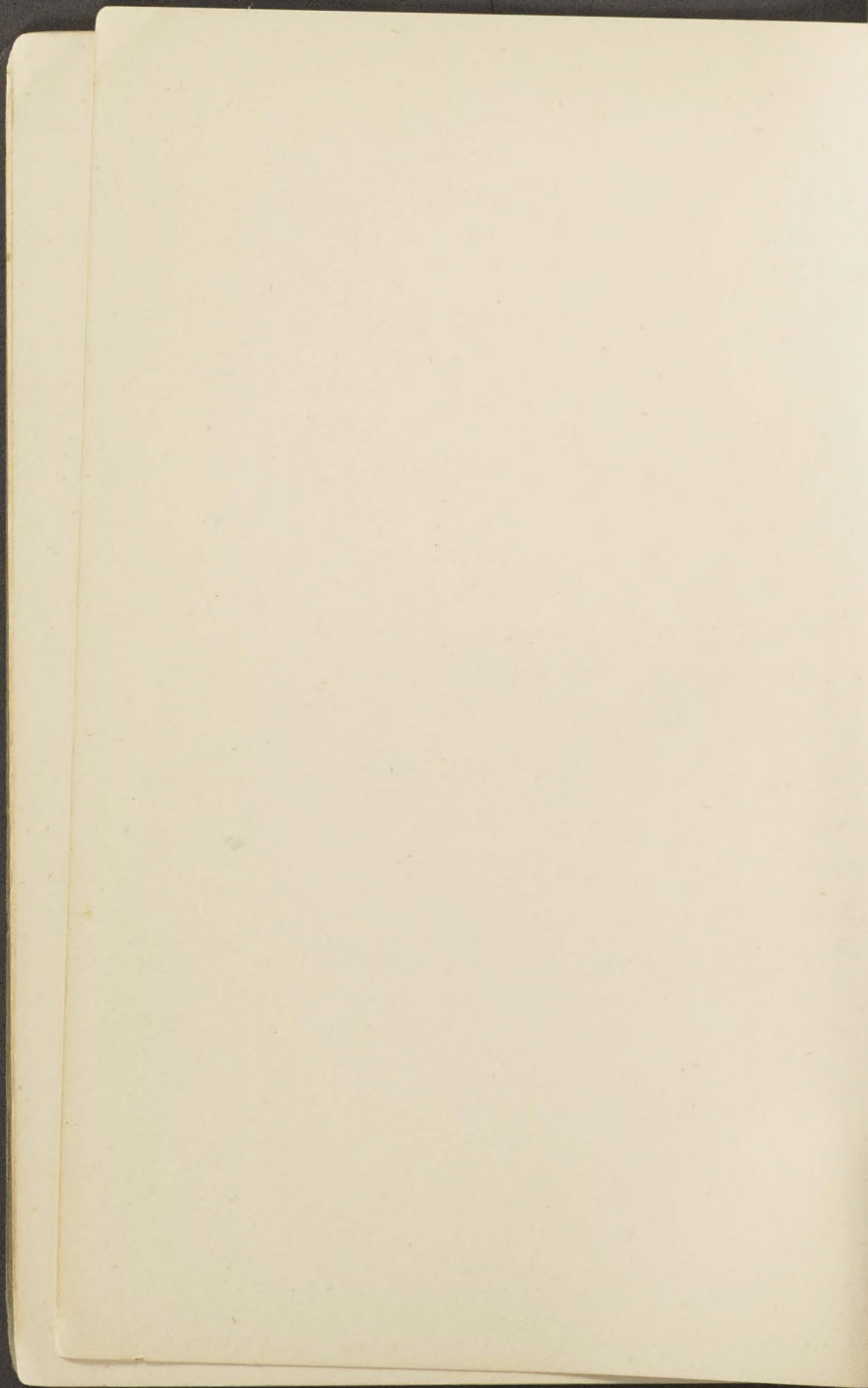
The author has attempted to supply a want by presenting to the reader an impartial analysis of the "Affaire du Collier" from another standpoint, so that he may be in a position to form an independent opinion on this "mysterious imbroglio"—as it has been so appropriately entitled.

The correspondence of Marie Antoinette and her mother, extracted from the Archives of Vienna, and published by Messrs. Arneth and Geffroy, with which the majority of readers is not acquainted, forms the principal basis of the Part relative to the Queen. These letters throw quite a new light upon the much debated subject of her character and proclivities.



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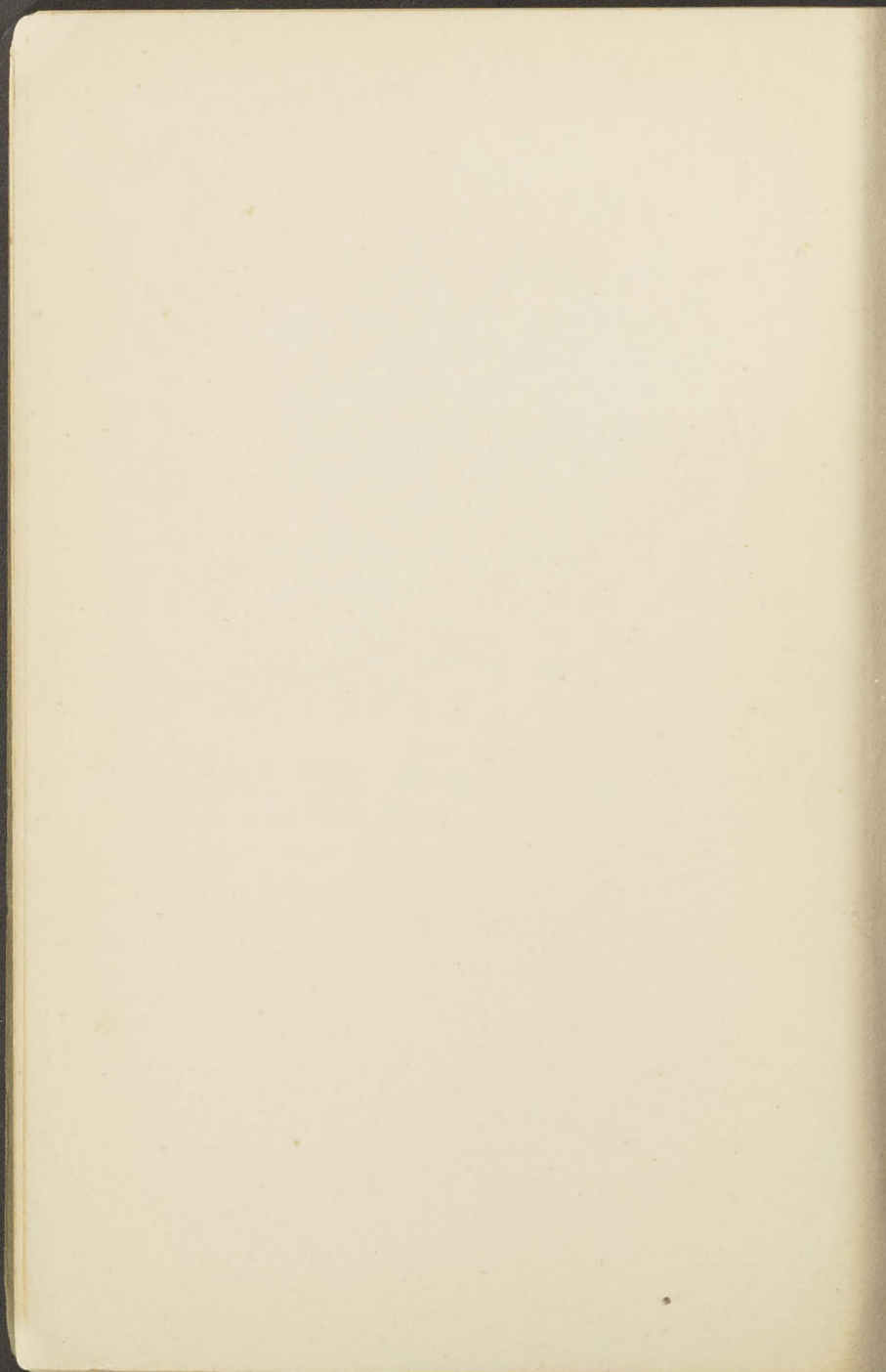
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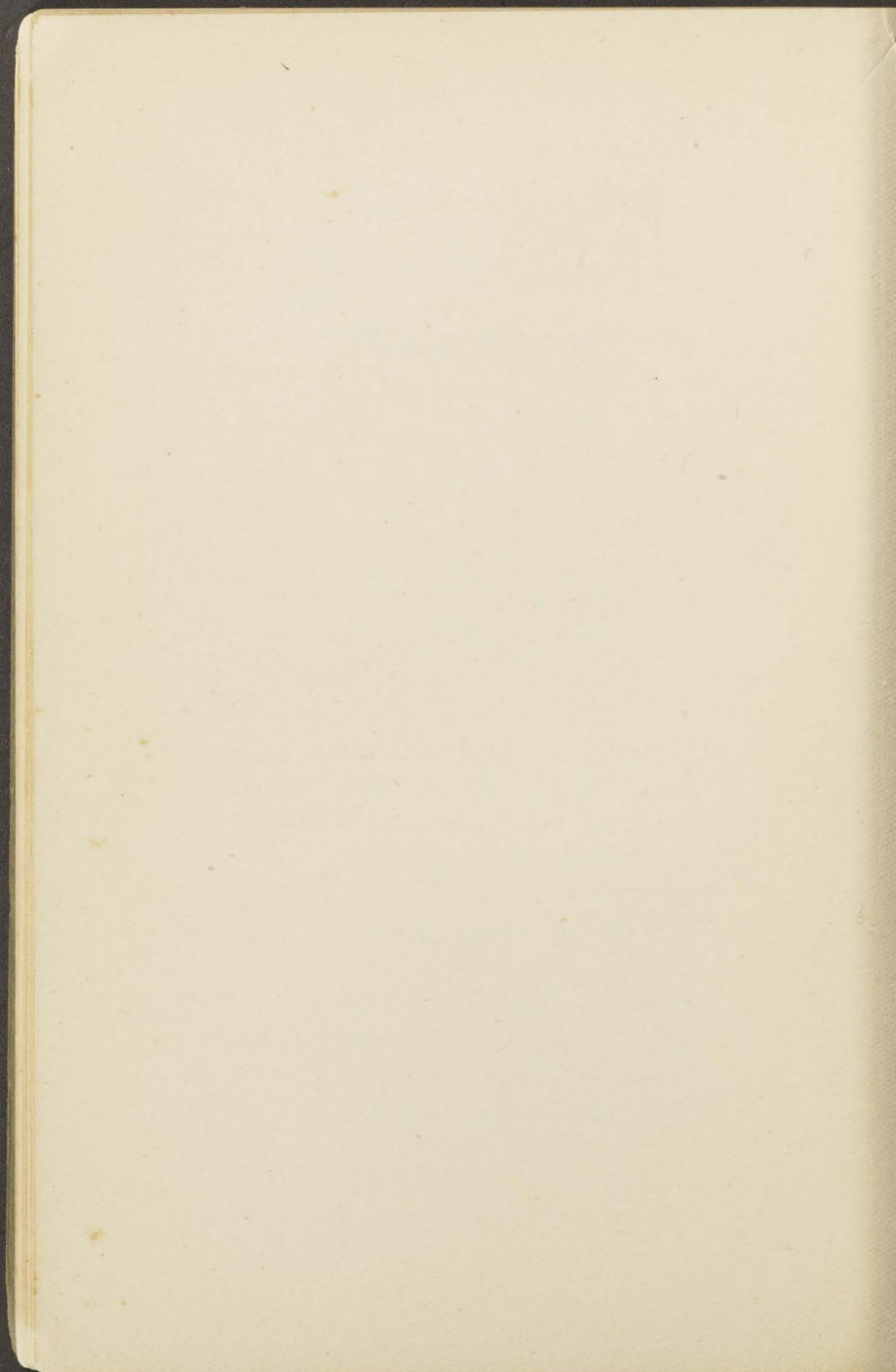
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## INTRODUCTORY.

"Un prélat d'un grade éminent  
A dégradé si bien son Eminence.  
Que, pour prouver son innocence,  
Il faut en faire un Innocent."

*Chanson du Jour (1786).*

A QUEEN of France; a Cardinal of illustrious descent; and an adventuress of royal extraction;—such are our leading "dramatis personæ" in "a series of the most surprising dramatic representations ever exhibited on any stage."<sup>1</sup>

Rather more than a century since, the 1786.  
subject of this "serio-comic drama" excited the curiosity and wonder of an audience embracing the civilized world; and to the present day it remains an historical enigma, bristling with difficulties innumerable,—all vaunted solutions notwithstanding.

We propose in the following pages to examine both the orthodox and heterodox interpretations of the affair; and more particularly to criticise the official solution, with a view of testing the soundness of its inductions by an impartial analysis of the "intrigue" as therein represented.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle.

<sup>2</sup> The official solution is given at length in M. Campardon's "Marie Antoinette et le procès du Collier" etc.

This work is regarded as a sort of Text Book and contains what may be called the orthodox version of the affair.



For such of our readers as are not fully conversant with the nature of this "intrigue" the following brief outline of its leading features may, perhaps, prove useful.

*Jeanne de Valois.* The adventuress and heroine of our drama is Jeanne de Saint Remy de Valois, a lady descended from a natural branch of the House of Valois, but more generally known as Countess de La Motte, the name she acquired by marriage.

*Her reputed favour with the Queen.* On the strength of Royal descent, her family misfortunes and highly romantic adventures, Madame de La Motte succeeded in establishing throughout the Parisian world a very general belief that the Queen, Marie Antoinette, had graciously interested herself in her future welfare, and had even honoured her with private audiences, preparatory to a public, or official reception;—further, that the restoration of a portion of her ancestral estates, which had now reverted to the crown, was in actual contemplation and a mere question of time.

The prevalence of this belief is not questioned.

*The Cardinal de Rohan.* Our hero is Louis René Edouard de Rohan, Cardinal, Prince and Bishop of Strasbourg, Grand Almoner of France, etc.; in short one of the highest personages in the kingdom, and sovereign in the German portion of his diocese.

His Eminence, in addition to his high birth and position, was otherwise a very conspicuous individuality; notorious for certain proclivities rather difficult to

reconcile with his sacred calling. The relations well-known to have existed between the Cardinal and Madame de La Motte were of a very tender and intimate nature, and, under such circumstances, her rising favour with the Queen very naturally formed a common topic of their confidences.

Being, for some variously explained offence, under the cloud of the Queen's displeasure, which interfered with certain ambitious projects, the Cardinal thought he might utilise the opportunity thus offered, through Madame de La Motte's intimacy with Marie Antoinette, by making her the medium of reconciliation and a return to favour.

Madame de La Motte, a woman of superior intelligence, naturally accepted the rôle he suggested; and eventually the intercessions of the fair sollicitress on the Cardinal's behalf were presumed to have proved successful, since his Eminence was given to understand that he had permission to address the Queen by letter, and submit for her consideration any justification he desired to offer for past offences.

The Cardinal did not fail, of course, to take full advantage of this permission, and a regular and very extraordinary correspondence ensued, and was continued, through the agency of Madame de La Motte, for over twelve months.

*The  
Correspond-  
ence.*

The existence of this curious correspondence is admitted; but the Queen's replies are pronounced forgeries.



*Interview in  
the Gardens.*

Be that as it may, the recipient of these royal and charming "billet-doux", who never questioned their authenticity, became naturally impatient, even importunate, for a personal interview, which gave rise to certain difficulties and consequent delays; eventually, however, the Countess named a particular evening when the Queen, she affirmed, would if possible accord him a few minutes' private audience in the gardens of the Palace of Versailles.

An interview in the gardens undoubtedly took place, though not precisely of the nature the Cardinal had desired. In lieu of Her Majesty a substitute was found to personate royalty, and his Eminence figured, apparently, in the light of a dupe.

*The explanations  
given.*

Two widely-different explanations have been advanced to account for the foregoing facts.

The official solution represents the Countess in the character of a gross impostor, trading on the credulity of the Cardinal from purely interested motives. Her reputed favour with the Queen is pronounced a myth; the correspondence a forgery; and the "mystification" in the gardens simply a necessary phase in her system of fraud.

Another version—that given by Madame de La Motte—represents the Queen as being behind the scenes throughout, a party both to the correspondence and the "mystification". This scene in the gardens with a fictitious Queen is said to have been planned



at her suggestion;—it is further advanced that H. M. was actually on the ground as a spectator to watch the proceedings, and much enjoyed the absurdity of the situation.

The epistolary intercourse in the meanwhile continued, and some six months after the scene in the gardens we find the Cardinal engaged in negotiating, ostensibly for the Queen, the purchase of that far-famed diamond Necklace manufactured by Messrs. Boehmer and Basenge, and originally destined for Madame du Barry.

*The Necklace purchased in the name of the Queen, 1785.*

This magnificent jewel was then valued at some £ 80,000, and according to certain arrangements accepted by the jewellers, this amount was to be liquidated by instalments. The agreement was drawn out in the Cardinal's own handwriting, and signed "Marie Antoinette de France."

The Cardinal acknowledges having received this necklace from the jewellers on the 1st February, 1785, and declares he delivered it the same day into the hands, as he believed, of the Queen's confidential messenger.

The first instalment not being forthcoming at the date agreed on, the jewellers became rather alarmed about their money;—after communicating with his Eminence, who assured them he had received his authority *direct from Her Majesty*—they preferred their application for payment to the Queen.

*Who denies  
all know-  
ledge of the  
transaction.*

Marie Antoinette thereupon distinctly denied all knowledge of the negotiation. Not knowing whom or what to believe, and becoming more and more alarmed about their £ 80,000, Boehmer and Bassenge eventually decided to bring the matter to the notice of the King.

The affair thus became public.

*Trial and  
Verdict.*

Submitted to the jurisdiction of Parliament, the trial lasted months. The Cardinal was acquitted on the grounds of having been a dupe of the Countess, who—it was assumed—had palmed off a fictitious intimacy and forged correspondence, a false Queen and supposititious Queen's messenger; thereby appropriating the entire necklace.

*Sentence.* She was sentenced first to be stripped naked and publicly flogged, then imprisoned for life.

This barbarous sentence was duly carried out in all its horrors, but she managed to escape from confinement with the evident, indeed admitted, connivance of the authorities.<sup>1</sup>

The Countess took refuge in England, and there published those curious "Mémoires Justificatifs" which constitute in fact her defence and contain her version of the intrigue.<sup>2</sup>

*The question  
at issue.*

It will be seen at once from the foregoing sketch that the whole question hinges on the possible implication of the Queen.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix VII.

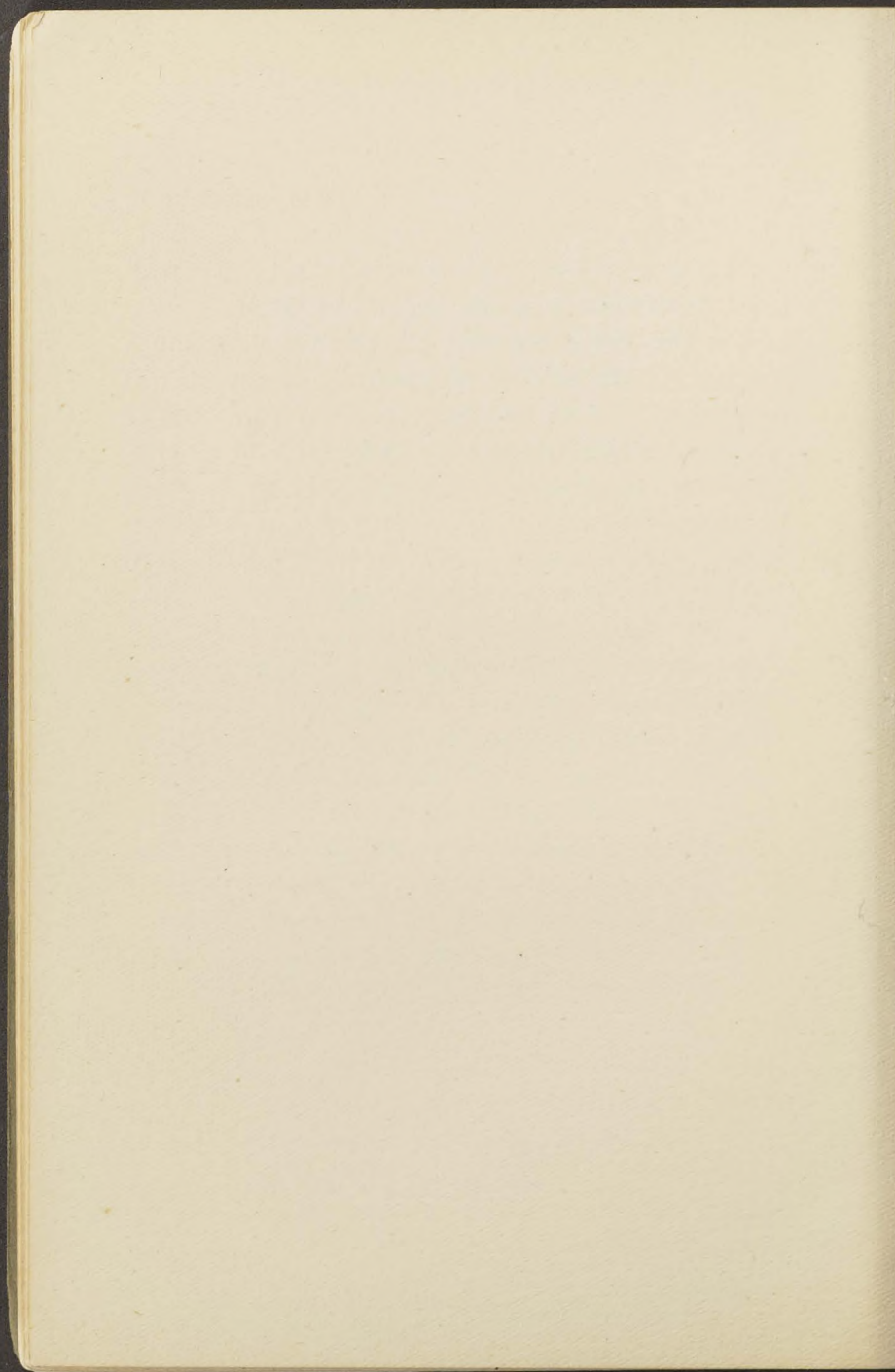
<sup>2</sup> See Appendix I.

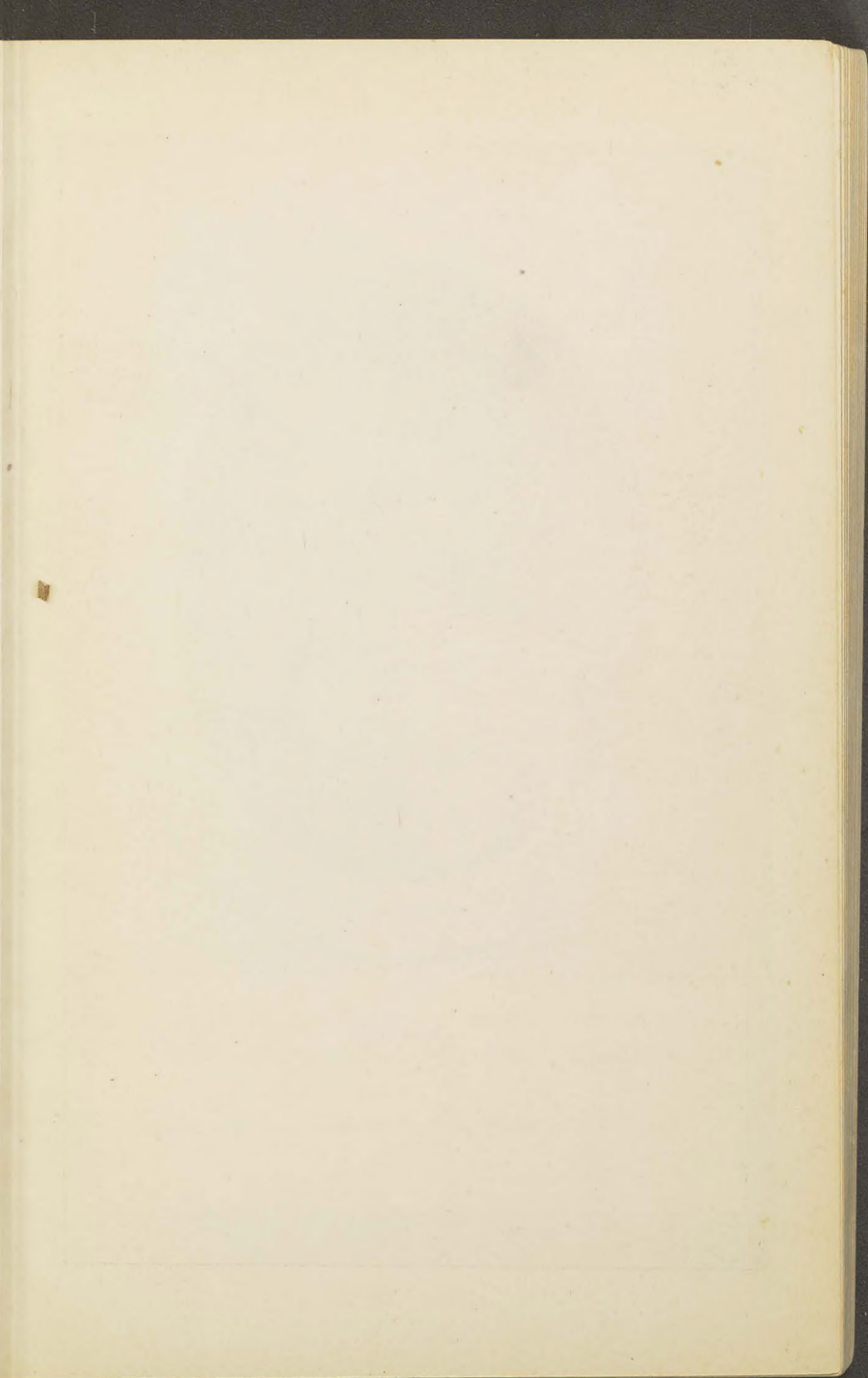
Was she, or was she not, in any way mixed up in the affair?

This theorem was inadmissible in 1785, being regarded as too sacrilegious, too impious to discuss.

Yet the argument, after all, resolves itself into a question of probabilities, and must be canvassed irrespective of persons, and apart from any partialities of sentiment which interfere, so sadly, with all historiographical accuracy.









Jeanne de St Remy de Valois  
Comtesse de La Motte



MARIE ANTOINETTE  
AND  
THE DIAMOND NECKLACE.

PART I.

JEANNE DE VALOIS.

"Madame de La Motte avait-elle été réellement admise dans l'intimité de Marie Antoinette? Les lettres qu'elle remettaient au Cardinal, étaient-elles vraies ou supposées?"

*L. Blanc.*

"Où est la vérité?"

C'est la question qu'on est obligé de se poser à chaque pas dans cette malheureuse affaire, où tout n'est qu'incertitudes et contradictions."

*L. Combes.*

JEANNE DE SAINT-REMY DE VALOIS DE LUZ, the celebrated Countess de La Motte of necklace notoriety, was of illustrious descent, issue of the blood-royal of France through a natural son of Henry II. of Valois. Her ancestors, the Barons de Saint-Remy de Valois, had resided for about two centuries at Bar-sur-Aube in Champagne, lords of several manors and broad domains,—comprising the estates of Essoyes, Fontette, and Verpillière.<sup>1</sup>

*Jeanne de Valois. Her royal descent, and ancestral grandeurs.*

<sup>1</sup> "Immenses propriétés"—writes Beugnot. This Count's Memoirs contain much valuable information regarding the subject of our inquiry. He was behind the scenes during a great portion of the time that the events described occurred, and has thrown considerable light upon certain parts that have been designedly obscured.

*Subsequent  
destitution  
and misery  
of the family.*

At the period when our story opens, however, all this grandeur was but a dream of the past, and had been succeeded by the most abject destitution with all its concomitant miseries. The last baron, Jeanne's father, 1762. died in the "hôtel-dieu" at Paris, his mind for some time previous having wellnigh given way under its weight of degradation and sufferings. He left his children—there were then three, two girls and a boy—the heritage of beggary, with some old genealogical title-deeds,—sole item saved from the family wreck.

*The children  
vagrants.*

Vagrancy became thus their doom, and public charity their sole means of existence. Their surviving parent—a woman of considerable personal attractions, but of utterly worthless character—made beggary a profession, sending the unfortunate children into the streets to solicit alms of the passing public. She traded, in short, on their royal descent and present destitution; on the sympathies excited by their piteous tale and touching appeals for aid.

A soldier, with whom this woman had subsequently formed a connection, took up the trade. He appropriated the titles and impudently solicited charity as the Baron de Valois. Condemned for fraud and sentenced to five years' banishment, this self-constituted step-father disappears from the scene, and with him also disappeared their most unnatural mother, who heartlessly deserted her children, leaving them, almost naked, to the mercy of strangers, or to starve.



The wretched orphans were, ultimately, befriended by the Marchioness de Boulaingvilliers, who may be really said to have picked them out of the gutter. This benevolent, warm-hearted lady proved a second mother to the young castaways;—took them home, clothed and educated them, and stood their constant friend and benefactress as long as she lived.

*Madame de Boulaingvilliers shelters the orphans.*

Under her sheltering wing the children grew up. Whenever their interests,—and more especially the future of her favorite Jeanne, the elder daughter,—were under consideration, neither trouble nor expense was ever spared. Through her influence at Court the strong claims of this young family upon royalty, for protection and provision, were brought eventually to the notice of the throne. The young “baron”,<sup>1</sup> who was then serving as lieutenant in the navy, was presented to Louis XVI.; the royal descent of the family was recognised, and they were authorised to take the name and assume the “armes-brisées” of Valois.<sup>2</sup>

*Their royal descent and titles recognised by Louis XVI.*

Their birth thus publicly acknowledged, the grant of some provision, suitable to their origin, devolved naturally upon the state. Owing to a fortunate coincidence

*Scandalous provision by the Government.*

<sup>1</sup> Brévet of 27 June, 1777. In 1786 he commanded the “Surveillante” and was decorated with the cross.

<sup>2</sup> Lafont d'Aussonne. Jeanne was designated, at the same time, Mademoiselle de Valois, and her sister Mademoiselle de Saint-Remy. See also “The Story of the Diamond Necklace”, by H. Vizetelly.



some of the old family estates had lately reverted to royalty, therefore—as Beugnot points out,—the King had only to forego his claim upon this property to be enabled to restore to the Saint-Remys some portion of their ancient patrimony; but unfortunately there was no question of any restoration or even of a provision adequate to their recognised position. To Mademoiselle de Valois was granted a pension of 800 frs.—a pittance hardly sufficient to provide the necessities of existence, and decent clothing.

This “scandalous thirty pounds”—as Carlyle calls it,—was mistaken economy; such miserable parsimony on the part of the king exhibited a strange inconsistency of conduct, not to use any stronger expression. It seems, indeed, to have been his intention to get rid of these unwelcome claimants upon the royal bounty by driving the son into the Church, and his sisters into a convent. Threats would appear to have been even employed to induce the sisters *Longchamps* 1778—9. to take the veil.<sup>1</sup>

But a life of seclusion was not at all suited to the tastes of Mademoiselle Jeanne. Her ruling ambition was to regain some of her ancient patrimony—an ambition undoubtedly fostered by Madame de Bou-lainvilliers who never failed to utilise every available opportunity of promoting its realisation. In 1779 we

<sup>1</sup> “Ainsi s’éteindrait honorablement une famille qu’on ne pouvait produire à un plus grand jour sans faire contracter au Roi l’obligation de lui fournir une fortune proportionnée à son origine.” *Beugnot*.

find the two sisters at Bar-sur-Aube, the home of their infancy, bent on gathering all possible information touching the "biens de sa famille", as Jeanne explains, by instituting inquiries on the spot.

*Bar-sur-Aube, 1779.*

Shortly after their arrival here, a certain Madame de Suremont appears to have offered the sisters a temporary home on economical terms, with an additional attraction in the society "un peu libre" that frequented her house.<sup>1</sup> We can easily understand that the young damsels found this offer, and the incidental free and easy society, very much more to their taste than a conventual life.

Here it was that the Count Beugnot first made the acquaintance of the fascinating Jeanne, and quickly became so completely subjugated by the spells of the fair enchantress that his father, dreading the matrimonial results that seemed imminent, hurried him off post-haste to Paris.

Here too it was that Jeanne found, in the nephew of her hostess, her future husband M. de La Motte,—a person of good family and descent, but, unfortunately, of little or no means. She describes him as "elegant in person and polished in manners," which description was apparently just, since M. Lafont d'Ausonne, who met him in 1829

*M. de La Motte.*

<sup>1</sup> Beugnot.



when quite an old man, acknowledges his distinguished bearing and manners.<sup>1</sup>

*Marriage* At the time of the marriage, which took  
*June 1780.* place within twelve months, M. de La Motte was serving in the "gendarmerie", then the first cavalry regiment in France and refuge of the poorer nobility. All the privates ranked as officers and wore the cross of Saint Louis.<sup>2</sup> He was subsequently appointed to the regiment of Guards of the Count d'Artois, through the interest of the Baron de Crussol, son-in-law to the Marchioness de Boulainvilliers.<sup>3</sup>

*Death of* It is clearly evident that the means of  
*Madame de* existence of this young couple must have  
*Boulainvil-* been extremely limited, in fact they ap-  
*liers, 1781.* parently started with little capital beyond their wits to fall back on, and this not very brilliant prospect was, shortly afterwards, still further obscured by the death of the Marchioness, who fell a victim to small-pox.<sup>4</sup>

This was, of course, an irremediable loss to Jeanne, who again found herself cast, as it were, adrift upon the world, burdened with an illustrious origin and, in

<sup>1</sup> "Sa mise élégante et soignée, ses manières parfaitement polies, son salut distingué, parlait en sa faveur",—and M. d'Aussonne was not the person likely to exaggerate any of his advantages moral or physical.

<sup>2</sup> Beugnot.

<sup>3</sup> In the "brévet" of 1784, raising the pension of Madame de La Motte to 1500 frs., her husband is designated: "Sieur Comte de La Motte". *Premier Mémoire pour, etc.*

<sup>4</sup> She died in the arms of Madame de La Motte, who tended her throughout the attack, with the tenderness and devotion of a loving daughter



addition, an impecunious husband, and without any means of supporting her position with even decency.

We have been so far dealing (as briefly as possible), with the antecedents of Madame de La Motte before any question of a presumed intimacy with the Queen, and its consequences, was on the "tapis." We now proceed to take into consideration the circumstances more immediately leading up to, or connected with, this intimacy and the subsequent purchase of the diamond necklace.

The position that Madame de La Motte occupied in society first claims our attention as being one of those points that have been so studiously misrepresented by the party interested in discrediting her life, and it is only comparatively lately that we have been in a position to correct some of the old false-colouring.

*Madame de  
La Motte's  
position in  
society.*

Although now, as we have seen, thrown once more upon her own resources, Madame de La Motte was no longer without allies to fall back on. Madame de Boulainvilliers had made a point of introducing her to many friends, more particularly to friends at Court whose position or influence she thought might prove useful and beneficial; the houses of persons of distinction, we learn, were thrown open to her; she reckoned among her acquaintances people of rank, and interested numerous protectors.<sup>1</sup>

*M. Renée  
on this head.*

<sup>1</sup> "On s'intéressait à cette femme, dernier rejeton d'une branche royale, à qui la monarchie n'assurait pas même du pain; aussi les relations ne lui manquèrent point."

*A. Renée.*

*Beugnot*  
*ditto 1783.*

From Count Beugnot, her old suitor, who was intimately acquainted with her goings-on in Paris and elsewhere, we glean further information on this head.

The tone of her house—he says—and the society she both received and frequented were decidedly good; he enumerates some of the persons he was in the habit of meeting at her table, remarking that he only refers to those details in order to correct one of the errors committed in representing Madame de La Motte as a contemptible adventuress of no social position.<sup>1</sup>

Viscount Barras, who was one of her intimate acquaintances, writes,<sup>2</sup>

“Baron de Valois, a naval officer, introduced me to his sister, the Countess de La Motte; she was beautiful, good, and kindly, and reputed to enjoy great influence; she kept up an extensive establishment and entertained largely” . . .

“She proposed to me to marry her sister. This union was about to take place when the course of events prevented it. Madame de La Motte went to Court, and lived in fine style.”

There is in fact abundant evidence forthcoming to establish the fact that Madame de La Motte was—as

<sup>1</sup> This was not only a misrepresentation, but very bad policy; since the lower the position Madame de La Motte held in the social scale the more inconceivable would appear the Cardinal's credulity. The only shadow of excuse for his belief in her story was founded on the hypothesis that she was, from position and descent, a person likely to have been distinguished by the royal favour.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of Barras*, edited by G. Durny, 1895.



she asserts—well received by the leading society of the day. She was an “adventuress” undoubtedly; but what drove her to that calling? She was no adventuress either by birth or by choice, but an object of much sympathy in 1776, when her royal descent was recognised by “that scandalous thirty pounds”! Her life, in fact, had embraced so much of the strange and romantic element in its past, that it attracted general attention, and her position evoked much commiseration even from the highest quarters.

Madame Campan admits that she was “protected to a certain extent by Madame, belle-sœur du Roi”. Madame de Provence it also appears, brought her case to the notice of the Queen, who we are told—“was about to yield to the impression it made upon her sensibility” when the King interposed with a veto.

Talleyrand is very clear on this point. He represents Jeanne de Valois as having friends at Court devoted to her cause and thoroughly convinced of her innocence. He testifies to the interest exhibited by Marie Antoinette and by Madame Elizabeth, the King’s sister; further adds that the Queen had the greatest desire to see Madame de La Motte, and was only prevented receiving her at Court by express command of the king, who resisted, in this instance, the wishes both of the Queen and of his sister.<sup>1</sup> He therefore corroborates Madame Campan.

*Madame  
Campan’s  
admissions,  
and Viz-  
etelly.*

*Talleyrand  
more explicit.*

<sup>1</sup> Colemache.



*Duc de Penthievre.* The Duc de Penthievre, we learn, always showed Madame de La Motte the most marked attentions. She was dining at Château Vilain, the duke's seat, shortly before her arrest, and on her departure the duke escorted her as far as the door of the second salon—an honour he always reserved for princesses of the blood.<sup>1</sup>

*Duc de Guines and Baron de Crussol.* Among the autographs of M. F. de Conches' collection, figures a letter dated Sept. 13th, 1785, written by Madame de La Motte during her imprisonment in the Bastille. It is addressed to the Duc de Guines, one of the Queen's most distinguished favorites,<sup>2</sup> and is "couched in terms of extreme familiarity", as M. de Conches observes. There is likewise a letter from her to the Baron de Crussol, who<sup>3</sup> was a member of the Queen's select society at the little Trianon. We therein see the familiar style in which she was in the habit of corresponding with him, and the very intimate character of their friendship, which had also been one of long standing.

<sup>1</sup> Beugnot.

<sup>2</sup> "Toujours si particulièrement protégé par la Reine". Vienna Correspondence.

<sup>3</sup> "Cette lettre"—writes M. F. de Conches—"est une demande de continuation de secours, ou, si l'on veut, une lettre d'amour intéressé, pleine de tendresse et d'un tour agréable dans certaines parties... la La Motte y parle de la Duchesse de Duras, qu'elle compte de voir la semaine prochaine. C'est une bien vertueuse et digne femme; je la verrai seule. Le public ne doit en être instruit, ce qui pourrait faire causer, attendu qu'il m'a été défendu de ne voir personne, crainte que je ne parle." Vol. I. p. 171.

We see that the Duchesse de Duras, "dame du palais" to the Queen, had made arrangements for a private interview with the condemned in the prison of La Salpêtrière, and—what is certainly suggestive—only a short time before she effected her escape from confinement, an escape confessedly connived at.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the duchess, other ladies of position, moving in the first society, visited Madame de Valois when in prison.

The Princesse de Lamballe, we are told, presented herself, more than once, at La Salpêtrière on kind offices intent, evidently an emissary from the Queen.<sup>2</sup>

It is undeniable, in short, that Madame de La Motte moved in good society, interested numerous friends, and had warm and influential supporters in the background. The notice, indeed, that her birth, misfortunes, and romantic adventures attracted, only served to increase the difficulties of the situation. She was drawn, by the sheer force of circumstances, into a position she had not the means, without extraneous assistance, of supporting.

Wealth, with all that its possession commands, and to emerge from obscurity—that was the dream of

<sup>1</sup> It is also worthy of note that in this intimate communication with her friend we find very pointed allusion to one of the complaints she subsequently publicly advanced—the jealous precautions taken to prevent her indulging in any inconvenient liberties of speech, to shut up her mouth in fact.

<sup>2</sup> Bertin, Lafont d'Ausonne, Blanc, Lescure.



her life, and her wild struggles to realise this dream coloured her whole existence.

And realise it she undoubtedly did.

*Her means  
of existence  
and source  
of affluence.*

This brings us to the next question under dispute:—viz. her means of existence. Her style of living betokened a command of money, even exhibited a certain affluence; it becomes, therefore, important to consider the sources whence this affluence sprang.

*Reputed  
"gallan-  
teries."*

It is unquestionable that what M. Renée euphemistically calls "*la gallanterie*" was one of the means employed to further her ends.<sup>1</sup> Her morality was the current morality of the day. It was an era of feminine intrigue; women owing their influence to the prevailing moral depravity, and quite unscrupulous as to the means whereby they acquired power. Society revelled in an atmosphere of corruption, and few of its votaries could venture to cast the first stone, or offer, perhaps, the excuses Madame de Valois might advance in extenuation of their conduct.

She has been credited with several lovers; probably—as is pretty generally the case—the list has been exaggerated. Personally highly attractive, and of singularly captivating manners, she was fully alive to the effects of her "*irresistible fascinations*," and

<sup>1</sup> "Tourmentée par l'ambition d'un sang méconnu, elle s'agitait, avec un sorte de rage, pour sortir l'obscurité; elle y employait tout ce qui était à son usage,—l'intrigue et la gallanterie".



doubtless exercised these powers to the greatest possible advantage.

It is hardly probable that the Count d'Artois, the king's brother, who figures on the roll of her admirers, was suffered to sue in vain. He has, indeed, been indicated as the channel through which she succeeded in approaching the Queen. Anyhow, from his character, position, and well-known intimacy with Marie Antoinette, he was a wooer Madame de La Motte would think it worth her while conciliating and winning over to her cause; and since her husband, in his Memoirs, alludes to the Count's "tentatives pour m'enlever mon épouse," there appears to have been some foundation for the pretty general "on dit."

*With  
the Count  
d'Artois.*

From the tone of her letters to the Baron de Crussol, it might be presumed that he was a favored suitor as well as a fast friend to the last.

*The Baron  
de Crussol.*

The nature of the connection that existed between Madame de Valois and the Cardinal de Rohan cannot be mistaken or questioned, though his partisans and the Church party tried, naturally, to ignore the scandal. Beugnot clearly establishes the fact, which indeed was publicly accepted at the time.<sup>1</sup>

*The Cardinal  
de Rohan.*

<sup>1</sup> He had an opportunity of reading some of the letters de Rohan was in the habit of writing to her. "It is fortunate," he tells us, "for the memory of the Cardinal, that these letters have been burnt, it is, at the same time, a loss for the history of the human passions.

*Mademoi-  
selle de Valois  
makes his  
acquaint-  
ance.*

As grand Almoner the cardinal had the control over a million and a half to assist "la noblesse pauvre", and the Marchioness de Boulainvilliers, shortly before her decease, had introduced her favourite to this prelate, and solicited in her favour his interests and sympathy. Here was a protector of the character, position, and means exactly suited to the present requirements of Madame de La Motte, for though no immediate results followed that introduction, Madame Jeanne evidently came to regard him subsequently in the light of a very promising ally, who might perhaps prove a stepping-stone for her ambitious projects.<sup>1</sup>

Madame de Valois was by all accounts a very attractive and fascinating woman, with personal advantages undoubtedly striking. Fine and expressive deep blue eyes, with dark well-arched eyebrows; mouth rather large, but garnished with admirable teeth; a profusion of chestnut hair; complexion remarkably fair and clear—"of dazzling whiteness"; beautiful hands and small feet; an "ensemble" that one can easily imagine, as indeed is acknowledged, might prove irresistible. She seduced all she came

<sup>1</sup> The Prince de Rohan was scandalously notorious. This high dignitary of the Church, cardinal, bishop of Strasbourg and Grand Almoner,—writes M. Droz—retained at the age of 50 "tous les goûts d'une jeunesse dissolue";—certain portions of the funds entrusted to his keeping as Almoner, for distribution in aid of the unfortunate, he turned aside to feed his debaucheries.

M. A. Renée is equally explicit:—"Dans tout le siècle il ne s'était pas vu un prélat de mœurs plus effrontées."



across; "her enchanting smile went straight to the heart."<sup>1</sup>

Such were the batteries she prepared now to open upon the doomed cardinal, and the result could scarcely have appeared the least doubtful.

Count Beugnot had at one time favoured the Countess with his views and opinions as to the best method of soliciting alms. Such are only effective—he maintained—from a carriage, or from the church doors. Being essentially a practical woman, Jeanne thought she would utilise this advice by securing the loan of his carriage and footman for her contemplated visit to his Eminence. This appeared to offer a very favourable opportunity for testing her friend's theories in a highly convenient manner.

And the result proved eminently satisfactory. Her first interview only lasted half an hour, but promised well—was "full of hope" for the future. The second took place shortly after, at his Eminence's express invitation, conveyed in a "billet doux" of a very affectionate character, and terminated as was intended! Madame Jeanne found herself complete mistress of the situation.

*Madame de Valois' first interview with the Cardinal, 1782.*

Here we have, undoubtedly, the real origin of Madame de La Motte's apparent command of money, and to this prolific source it was attributed by the general public. This view of the

*Beugnot's testimony.*

<sup>1</sup> Beugnot, Michelet, Talleyrand.



subject is fully borne out by Count Beugnot, whose testimony has all the weight due to an eye-witness and one admittedly behind the scenes. He does not mince matters, but directly attributes her affluence to the intimate character of her relations with the Cardinal, and tells us further that "subsequent events only tended to confirm this opinion."

*The Con-  
ventional  
Theory.* But this would not, of course, suit the writers on the conventional side, who maintain, on the contrary, that prior to the summer of 1784, Madame de Valois was living in a state of abject destitution, and that her subsequent opulence originated in the fraudulent misappropriation—first of a sum of 50,000 frs., then of a further sum of 100,000 frs., and finally from the plunder of the necklace, all due to the Cardinal's "extreme credulity."

Dates therefore become here a question of much importance, since *August 1784* is indicated as the epoch of her first swindling transaction, and command of money.

Let us examine how far the data supplied by these writers support their theory.

*Target's  
admissions.  
1782-1783.* It is admitted by the Cardinal's advocate, M. Target, that as far back as 1782, when living in furnished apartments at the Hôtel Rheims, the de La Mottes kept a footman and a jockey, two or more women servants, and their private carriage; thus exhibiting "le faste mal-adroit de la misère", since their sole resources consisted—as represented—of a pension of 800 frs. and the occasional charitable

donation of a few louis from the Cardinal's benevolent purse.<sup>1</sup>

Better quarters are taken and occupied the following year; but the "aisance apparente" of this establishment, in the rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles, which cannot be controverted, is represented as "an augmentation of their real misery".

In addition to a carriage and four servants, we find reference to half a dozen silver dishes, which certainly figure rather awkwardly as indicating abject destitution.<sup>2</sup>

M. Campardon, the great orthodox authority, follows suit and represents the de La Mottes as regular beggars previous to the summer of 1784; but it peeps out that, in addition to those indications of comfort and ease already cited, these reputed paupers had also a country villa at Charonne.

The latest author on the subject under consideration, Mr. H. Vizetelly, similarly exhibits Madame de La Motte as living from hand to mouth, without means or credit, with the prospect of beggary looming in the distance; with the wolf at the door, and no bread to eat but that of charity;

*M. Campardon's admissions.*

*Vizetelly on same subject.*

<sup>1</sup> The "benevolent" donations of the Cardinal were thus limited by his advocate, with the double object of exhibiting Madame de La Motte without means, while covering his client's unclerical relations with her.

<sup>2</sup> This "silver service" was borrowed from a friend, the Baron de Bienvilliers, who seems to have had no hesitation in trusting it to the keeping of these "paupers" for even six months.



on the eve of finding herself driven into the streets and highways again to implore charity, in the name of Valois, of the passing stranger. To avoid this disagreeable prospect it is suggested she becomes a liar and forger, and is preparing to become a thief.

Yet the same writer acknowledges that in the summer of 1783—or twelve months before the presumed fraud—the de La Mottes undoubtedly exhibited a certain display in their style of living in their spacious apartments in the rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles, a quiet and very respectable street consisting entirely of private houses. They had, at the same time, apartments at Versailles in the Hôtel de Jouy. In the spring of 1784 they had removed to the Hôtel de la Belle Image, one of the most aristocratic quarters of the royal town; where all the apartments were of a very superior class. The “service of silver” is mentioned, and they are credited with their “habitual extravagance.”

The foregoing is certainly no picture of misery and indigence inducing crime; yet so far we have been dealing only with the admissions of the strictly conventional school. When we seek for more disinterested testimony we get considerable light thrown upon what has been left designedly obscure.

*Talley-  
rand's des-  
cription in  
1782—3.*

Prince Talleyrand met Madame de Valois one evening at supper at the Hôtel-Cardinal. This was in 1782, or early in 1783, at the time she was prosecuting her suit with each



successive minister for the restoration of the family estates. He was much struck with her persuasive and fascinating manners, and the Princess de Guéménée, who was present, and had been much prejudiced against "cette intrigante"—as she called her—softened gradually under the irresistible charm of her manner, and even invited her to meet a party of influential friends at her own apartments the following evening.

Talleyrand describes her at this supper as covered with jewels, her diamonds rivalling in beauty those of the princess, and this display was exhibited while speaking of herself as "une pauvre sollicitieuse," to whom a miserly Government would only grant the beggarly pension of 800 frs.<sup>1</sup>

From Count Beugnot we learn that previous to the date of her presumed fraud in the August of 1784, the de La Mottes rented, not apartments, but the entire house in the rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles, where they lived sumptuously and kept their carriage. He and a certain Madame Colson,—a relative of Madame de La Motte, living with her as a sort of "dame de compagnie"—had been in the habit, whenever they met, of criticising their extravagance,—an expression evidently implying extravagancies of some standing.

Moved, perchance, by the pardonable vanity of displaying her newly acquired wealth midst

*Beugnot's  
description  
of her opu-  
lence 1783-4.*

1784.

<sup>1</sup> Colemache.

the scenes of her early miseries, she wrote to the Count, then down at Bar-sur-Aube, (1784) to the effect that she purposed spending a short time there and had sent on in advance her horses, wardrobe, etc.

In due time, we are told, a heavy-laden waggon arrived, drawn by a fine team and followed by two saddle-horses of great value. The steward in charge makes requisitions sufficient to have victualled the best house in the place for months. The de La Mottes arrive subsequently in an elegant "berline", preceded by a pair of outriders.

The Count Beugnot is invited to supper; a supper served by four footmen in liveries covered with gold lace. The service of silver is perfect and of the latest design. Madame Jeanne dresses in a style indicating excess of magnificence, her person sparkling with diamonds, of which she had a splendid set, and in addition an equally fine one of topazes.

This display was in August, 1784.

*Some of the  
Cardinal's  
munificence  
to Jeanne.*

It may have been convenient, perhaps necessary for the Cardinal to plead imbecility rather than acknowledge the real source whence Madame Jeanne derived this command of money, but Beugnot, who has no such motive for hiding the truth, is very explicit on this head.

He informs us that 126,000 frs. had been supplied to Madame de La Motte from the funds of the Grande-Aumônerie, and 30,000 frs. in addition from the Cardinal's private resources. These 150,000, together with



further subsequent advances,—“secours sans mesure sur la Grande-Aumônerie”—render absurd the pretence that she was driven to forgeries or theft in order to avoid beggary. Had she wanted more it was to be had—we are told—for the asking.<sup>1</sup>

This fact has been studiously ignored by interested writers, since it annihilates the convenient argument based upon Jeanne's presumed poverty as the motive for crime, and exposes a priestly scandal. The crude fact, however, is not to be gainsaid. Instead of being, as represented, the needy recipient of the Cardinal's “benevolent charities” Madame de La Motte was sumptuously provided for out of the funds of the Grande-Aumônerie, supplemented by intermediate advances from his private purse.<sup>2</sup>

We now come to consider the question of Madame de Valois' reputed intimacy with Marie Antoinette.

*Her reputed  
intimacy  
with the  
Queen.*

Was it a fiction or a fact?

Through all the vicissitudes of her eventful youth Jeanne never lost sight of her primary object,—the recovery of the Fontette estates; and in all her intrigues and manœuvres we can trace clear indications of the design she had formed of trying to interest the Queen on her behalf. She never let slip

<sup>1</sup> “Elle aurait pu exiger davantage; le temps des refus était déjà bien loin.”

*Beugnot.*

<sup>2</sup> Michelet, Droz, Beugnot. The denial by the Cardinal that he had ever supplied any funds to support the display exhibited by Madame de La Motte formed the real basis of her ruin.



any opportunity which she imagined might conduce to that end. During the supper at the Hôtel-Cardinal, to which we previously drew attention, she contrived—we are told—to extract a promise from Prince Talleyrand to interest his mother to further her aims on this head. His mother was then a “dame du palais.” But in the chief design she had in view, of gaining personal access to the Queen, her most valuable ally she undoubtedly found in the Cardinal.

*The Queen's  
animosity  
against the  
Cardinal.*

From causes that have been variously, though never satisfactorily, explained, and which it would be outside our object to discuss here, His Eminence had incurred the animosity of Marie Antoinette.<sup>1</sup> It remains even uncertain at what precise period this angry feeling arose, but it undoubtedly existed. The Cardinal, whose ambition centred in the ministry, was in despair; his only path lay through the Queen, and his chances of success, therefore, appeared hopeless, unless he could somehow dispel this prejudice. He had already made more than one fruitless attempt, and now fancied he saw a more promising opening through Madame de Valois, if she could only gain the royal ear as she hoped. Their views in fact were identical and culminated in the Queen.

*Dinner at  
the “Cadran  
Bleu,” 1782.*

Beugnot, who had proved eminently useful in confirming the genealogy of Madame de Valois and preparing her “Mémoire”

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix No. 2.

for presentation to the King, gives the most amusing description of a "tête-à-tête" dinner at the "Cadran Bleu", which came off very shortly subsequent to her second interview with the Cardinal. Quite elated by the very signal success of her attack on the episcopal fortress, and with an excess of candour most entertaining, Madame Jeanne gives her friend to understand that, while duly appreciating and grateful for all his past services, such was no longer the description of assistance of which she stood most in need. She sought counsel of a different kind. She wanted to find out the best way of getting at the Queen and the Comptroller-General. She intended—she said—to reside permanently at Versailles, to be on the spot ready to avail herself of any opportunity that might offer of interesting the Queen in her favour. She needed advice as to what she ought to do under such circumstances, and what not to do; how to weave a good intrigue and carry it out successfully, etc. For this "rôle" she naively gives Beugnot to understand she did not think he was quite up to the mark!

This curious example of their friendly confidences contains important information, and comes from excellent authority—none better. It fully corroborates Madame de La Motte's own Memoirs, wherein she points out how the Cardinal encouraged and urged her on in her endeavours to approach the Queen. We see that very shortly after their acquaintance commenced, she was actively engaged in prosecuting



her designs regarding the Queen, and carrying them out practically; not bent on inventing—as has been pretended—a fictitious intimacy, and “entering boldly on a career of imposture by trafficking on a credit that had no foundation, by selling an influence which she could not exercise”.<sup>1</sup> Her aims and intentions, we see, were bonâ fide, and centred in the Queen. Beugnot’s testimony is quite conclusive on this point.

Did she succeed?

Madame de La Motte retails at some length in her *Memoirs*, how she found herself incessantly thwarted in all endeavours to gain access by indirect means to the royal presence, owing to the jealousies that then surrounded the throne and rendered abortive every successive attempt; how, when utterly disheartened, by repeated failure and humiliating repulses, she was eventually persuaded by the Cardinal to hazard what he called a “coup d’éclat”—apply direct to the fountain head, throw herself at the feet of the Queen and plead her own cause “in propria persona”.

*Madame de  
Valois pre-  
sents her pe-  
tition to the  
Queen, 2nd  
Feb. 1784.*

The Cardinal’s secretary, the Abbé Georgel, corroborates this statement.<sup>2</sup>

Seizing the first convenient opportunity that offered, success—so she asserts—at length crowned her perseverance. The Queen, already—as we have seen—very favourably disposed, was as condescending and gracious as could

<sup>1</sup> Vizetelly.

<sup>2</sup> Son Eminence lui conseilla de s’adresser directement à la Reine.



possibly have been hoped, and promised her petition for the restitution of her ancestral estate an attentive consideration.

The practical Jeanne, with characteristic energy, followed up this first success by a written appeal for a private audience, which was graciously conceded, and carried into effect through the medium of Madame de Misery, first lady of the chamber.

*First private interview.*

"Adieu, nous nous reverrons"; such were the parting words of Marie Antoinette, at the termination of an eminently promising interview, which took place in the apartments of Madame de Misery. A second audience followed in due course, and was succeeded by others.

Her Majesty, we are told, gave Madame de Valois to understand that, from considerations of a personal nature, she would be unable to espouse her cause publicly, but would indirectly render all the aid in her power. She further suggested that Madame de Valois should send for her brother, who, as head of the house, was the proper channel through which any petition for restitution of the estates should pass.<sup>1</sup>

Such is the account given by Madame de La

<sup>1</sup> We must bear in mind that the Queen had previously shown a disposition to take some interest in Madame de Valois, though the King's "veto" had prevented it assuming any practical shape. She might, therefore, be readily conceived willing to carry out privately, if the opportunity presented itself, what she had been unable to do in a public or official manner.

Motte of the origin of her relations with Marie Antoinette.

*Observations on foregoing statement.* There are two points in this story that demand attention. Madame de La Motte names Madame de Misery as the medium

of communication, and we have unquestionable evidence that this lady was just the sort of person to have lent herself to an intrigue of this kind, and assisted in the way described. The Austrian *Madame de Misery.* Ambassador, Count Mercy d'Argenteau, tells us he had been obliged to intervene on several occasions to restrain the indiscretions of this lady, who had quite a "penchant à l'intrigue". From him we learn she had previously induced Marie Antoinette to grant audiences to certain ladies who solicited favours, the receptions taking place in the apartments of Madame de Misery.<sup>1</sup>

This lady, therefore, had evidently a vocation for the rôle Madame de La Motte assigns her, and it is clear it would not have been a very extraordinary or unprecedented circumstance for Marie Antoinette to have granted a private audience to Madame de La Motte in the apartments of Madame de Misery, as the former maintains she did.

*The caution regarding "Madame."* Again, Madame de La Motte tells us that an imperative injunction was imposed by the Queen as the price of her good will.

<sup>1</sup> Vienna Correspondence.



The interviews were to be kept a profound secret, not even excepting, indeed notably from, "Madame."<sup>1</sup>

"It is important to observe"—she continues—"that Her Majesty, in speaking of 'Madame', made use of expressions of an extremely unfavourable character; laid special stress upon the duplicity of that princess; recommended me not to put any trust in her; not henceforth to confide my affairs to her keeping, even counselling me not to see her at all:—counsel I could only interpret in the light of an express prohibition."

Now this caution regarding "Madame" attributed to the Queen by Madame de La Motte happens to coincide exactly with the private opinions entertained by Marie Antoinette respecting her sister-in-law. These opinions have been fully laid bare in the same work (Vienna Correspondence) where the disgust "Madame's" duplicity excited is expressed in no very measured terms.

We see, therefore, that Madame de Valois' medium of communication was the very person of all others most likely to have acted in that capacity; also that the language put into the Queen's mouth really expressed Her Majesty's private opinions and sentiments.

These coincidences are very remarkable if we are to regard the whole thing as a myth.

Its very general acceptance, fully admitted, argues in favour of the reality of its existence.

*The intimacy accepted as a fact by the public.*

<sup>1</sup> "'Madame' protected her to a certain extent" at this time, as we learn from Madame Campan.



*Campardon.* M. Campardon acknowledges that the belief, so commonly entertained, in Madame de Valois' private influence with Marie Antoinette, was the cause of her being run after by "crowds of people, with avidity."

*Vizetelly.* Mr. Vizetelly writes that a motley group of suitors in search of places, appointments or patronage, the redress of real or imaginary grievances, etc. would wait in her antechamber for an interview, and then supplicate her intercession in their favour; further that it was on the strength of this wide-spread belief the unfortunate jewellers solicited her influence with the Queen, to induce Her Majesty to purchase their magnificent necklace.

*Target.* Target admits "she deceived the whole world on this point."

*Campan.* And Madame Campan acknowledges it is quite impossible to understand how Madame de Valois contrived to make the public believe, as she certainly did, that she was "une amie de la Reine."

*Beugnot.* Beugnot likewise testifies to the prevalence of this belief.

The general public of Paris seems never to have questioned the reality of her relations with the Queen, and it is almost impossible to comprehend how any fictitious intimacy of the character thus described, could have been palmed off upon the public for a length of time, as pretended, without detection.

The Cardinal, anyhow, thoroughly believed in the reality of these relations from first to last,<sup>1</sup> and one can, therefore, readily picture how anxiously he watched the rising pulse of this private intercourse, and urged Madame Jeanne to seize some favourable moment for introducing his name and pleading his cause.

*The secret  
correspond-  
ence.*

The Memoirs of Madame de La Motte go on to explain how this was eventually brought about, though the endeavour at first produced no satisfactory results, so irradicable appeared the prejudice of the Queen. Some time having elapsed unmarked by any progress towards the desired end, the Cardinal, at Madame Jeanne's suggestion, hazarded the effect of a written solicitation for an interview, receiving in reply a verbal permission to write and justify, if he could, his past conduct.

This justificatory epistle is dated 4 April,<sup>2</sup> and elicited, eventually, a few lines of acknowledgment from the Queen. This led of course to a rejoinder, and thus originated a most curious correspondence, extending over twelve months and consisting, it is said, of over 200 notes.

<sup>1</sup> Intimately connected as he was with Madame de La Motte, and directly interested on this point, the argument advanced by the Church party, that he was grossly taken in, seems too absurd, even were there no other evidence forthcoming against it.

<sup>2</sup> It is given at length in the Memoirs of Madame de La Motte, who also gives a few of the presumed notes from the Queen, which, passing all through her hands, she found an opportunity of copying before handing them on to the Cardinal, who made away with the originals when arrested.



*Observations thereon by various writers.*

The existence of this correspondence is not questioned. It is admitted that the whole intrigue would, otherwise, be stripped of all probability, be devoid of common sense.

*Campardon and Georgel.*

The Queen's replies, however, are pronounced forgeries, the handiwork of Madame de Valois.

*L. Lacour.*

"It is difficult," as M. Lacour replies, "to comprehend so extended a series of forgeries on the part of a woman, 'spirituelle' certainly, but, only a short time since, entirely ignorant of the language of the Court; forgeries addressed to a distinguished diplomatist; a man master of various attainments; an 'habitué' of Versailles from his youth upwards; a person of eminence who had every facility, as well as the greatest interest, to make sure he was not imposed upon. How explain that such a fraud could have been carried out, an entire year, without the Cardinal detecting the imposition?"

*Louis Blanc.*

Again:—"Are we to conceive that, writing and receiving such letters—'lettres d'amour,' the Cardinal never sought for further successes, or at least to verify the success he had achieved? With constant access to Versailles, and frequent opportunities of crossing the path of the Queen, are we to suppose that, month after month, not one word was ever dropped, not a sign or allusion made to these letters,—and to such letters? But a word would have exposed the whole fraud."



The climax of absurdity is reached when we are asked to believe that throughout the continuance of this most extraordinary correspondence—wherein the Queen expresses herself in terms of unequivocal interest, confidence, familiarity and affection,—she constantly exhibited a “freezing aversion” for the Cardinal and kept him strictly at a distance. Not a word or sign when they met, indicative of any return to favour.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to accept such glaring inconsistency of conduct except on the hypothesis of some secret understanding, which a public demeanour of coldness was intended to cover;—a rôle in which Marie Antoinette was undoubtedly proficient, as we shall see by and by.<sup>2</sup>

When we come to consider the arguments advanced to rebut the suggestion of any intercourse having existed between Marie Antoinette and Madame de Valois, we find they consist of pure negations.

*Authorities  
in denial of  
the intimacy.*

Mr. Vizetelly, in support of the Queen’s personal denial, names Lacretelle, Besenval, Lauzun and Campan, “as people likely to be well-informed on the subject;”—not a very happy selection.

*Vizetelly.*

Without questioning in any way the “truth and honesty” of M. Lacretelle, it is sufficient to observe that he only speaks as to his *convictions*, not to his *personal knowledge*.

*M. Lacretelle.*

<sup>1</sup> Vizetelly.

<sup>2</sup> Part 4. “The Queen.”

*Besenal.* Besenal does not say a word about the intimacy. In fact Besenal's star had set, his hour of favour passed away. He was not then in the Queen's intimate confidence, so could not have any direct personal information to give on the subject.

*Lauzun.* Lauzun was also, in his turn, now left out in the cold, and since his Memoirs terminate in 1783, they could scarcely contain any allusion to an intimacy which commenced subsequently.

*Campan.* Madame Campan certainly denies it; the value, however, of her uncorroborated testimony is highly questionable.<sup>1</sup>

The Queen, in the present instance was, we must bear in mind, on her defence. Under such circumstances she would certainly deny what it might be dangerous or imprudent to acknowledge. The Arneth Correspondence leaves no doubt on this head.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Vizetelly further argues:—"that it is impossible to believe in this intimacy for a single moment, since those who lived in the Queen's service and society were unanimous in maintaining that the Countess was never once admitted to the Queen's presence."

This is very sweeping, though slightly indefinite; but since the intimacy was presumed to be clandestine, the Queen's more immediate surroundings would have been precisely that portion of her society from whom it was to be kept a profound secret. Had Madame

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 3.

<sup>2</sup> See Part 4. "The Queen."



de Misery been cited as an authority in denial, or Mademoiselle Dorvat,—both named by Madame de La Motte as privy to the intimacy,—it would have been more to the point.<sup>1</sup>

No satisfactory evidence, or even convincing argument, has ever been advanced against the possibility of this intimacy and correspondence. We are asked to reject them as inadmissible, as a pure fable, and yet this “fable” is at the same time declared to have been of so extraordinary a character, so difficult, not to say impossible, to have been invented and carried through, that this argument has even been urged as a plea in favour of the Cardinal:—that it was scarcely surprising he should have accepted it for genuine; that he could hardly have been expected, under the circumstances, to have questioned its reality.<sup>2</sup>

In other words the reality would have seemed less inconceivable than the “fable”!<sup>3</sup>

One of the most interesting and amusing incidents in relation to this intimacy and correspondence, their first-fruits, indeed, as regards the Cardinal, was the episode of the “Bosquet”. It was not of course to be expected that his Eminence would rest contented with any mere epistolary intercourse. Personal communication with the

*The episode  
of the “Bos-  
quet”, 1784.*

<sup>1</sup> Besides Madame de Misery and Mademoiselle Dorvat, Madame de La Motte names some half dozen others who were privy to her relations with the Queen, none of whom have been cited in denial.

<sup>2</sup> Target.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, No. 4.



Queen was his aim and the subject of constant solicitations, and the persistence he showed on this point resulted in an admitted fact, though of a nature far more akin to fiction,—that extraordinary midnight rendezvous in the gardens of Versailles.

*Madame de Valois' version of the "mystification."* Madame de La Motte represents the farce as owing its origin to an intended test of the Cardinal's discretion—he was quite notorious for his indiscretions—before the Queen would venture to risk the chances of a private reception of his Eminence. To this end, the idea of foisting a personal substitute for royalty occurred to the Queen, who suggested that Madame de Crussol should play the part, and arranged the whole plot, even fixing on the spot in the Gardens where the meeting should take place.

Originally conceived as a test of the discretion of the Cardinal, the Queen soon came to regard the intended "mystification" in the light of an amusing comedy, and determined to be present as a spectator on the occasion.

*Mademoiselle d'Oliva.* A personal representative having been decided on, and the original selection of Madame de Crussol being regarded, on consideration, as injudicious, a Mademoiselle d'Oliva was hunted up and chosen to personate royalty.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D'Oliva or d'Olisva, was an assumed name, the anagram of Valois, under which Madame de La Motte temporarily disguised a certain Mademoiselle Marie Nicole le Guay, of rather dubious antecedents.

The scene that subsequently took place in the gardens of Versailles would be pronounced incredible, had it not been judicially authenticated; it was more like an act in some comedy.

The spot selected was a retired and shady bosquet, and the hour midnight. A man, wrapped in a mantle, hat well over his brows, advances with stealthy and cautious tread towards a presumably-royal lady, who, in a few gracious words, assures him the past is forgotten, the future hopeful, and, in token thereof, presents a rose. The favoured recipient presses the flower to his bosom, and mutters a few broken expressions of acknowledgment and gratitude, gently raising and imprinting a kiss on the daintiest of feet. Suddenly, on an alarm of approaching footsteps, the scene vanishes, the actors disappear.<sup>1</sup>

The spectators retired separately, all perfectly satisfied with their night's entertainment.

The only disputed point is whether the Queen was or was not present as a spectator. *Was the Queen present?*

The account of the affair as given by Madame de Valois is circumstantial, and the testimony

<sup>1</sup> The depositions of d'Oliva confirm the statement of Madame de La Motte, that it was she, Madame de Valois, who warned the actors of approaching footsteps, and not Villette. This is an important point. The Cardinal had an object in bringing Villette upon the stage and making him "un des principaux acteurs de la scène de la d'Oliva." But the rôle here attributed to him is contradicted by the depositions of Villette and Madame de La Motte, likewise by Mademoiselle d'Oliva.



of the chief actors substantiates to a certain point, her statements.

The fair representative of royalty, the *false* Queen, gives in her depositions some details, in reference to the presence of the *real* Queen, that are very remarkable.

She testifies that the instructions of Madame de La Motte,—while conducting her to the place of rendez-vous—were as follow:—

“Vous remettrez cette rose, avec la lettre, à la personne qui se présentera devant vous, et vous lui direz seulement:—‘Vous savez ce que cela veut dire.’

“La Reine s’y trouvera, pour voir comment se passera votre entrevue. Elle vous parlera. Elle est là. Elle sera derrière vous,” etc.

It appears therefore, that the actual presence of the Queen was a prominent feature in the programme. Madame de La Motte pointedly told this witness that the Queen would be present during the interview; even directing her attention to the spot where Her Majesty was actually then waiting to watch the proceedings.<sup>1</sup>

Now these pointed and precise details in reference to the intended presence of Marie Antoinette, which are ignored by interested writers, were quite superfluous for the carrying out of the plot. Except on the hypothesis that the Queen was an actual spectator they were meaningless and absurd.

<sup>1</sup> M. Campardon evidently found this portion of her deposition embarrassing, not easy to explain, so he omits altogether to notice it!

Another point in the deposition of this witness invites attention. She says she returned to Paris from Versailles "dans une voiture de la Cour."

This remarkable evidence has never been gainsaid or explained,—simply passed by in silence! <sup>1</sup>

"La farce était jouée et la Reine s'était amusée," writes Madame de La Motte; but since she asserts that, following the suggestions of her husband, she had previously revealed to the Cardinal the motive of the plot and the intended presence of a supposititious Queen, the farce would seem to have been played out with Marie Antoinette for dupe, instead of de Rohan, who simply lent himself with very good grace to the contemplated deception, hoping that, by humouring the fancy of the Queen, he would reap a plentiful harvest of royal favour in return.

This inconvenient, though highly natural, view of the "mystification" is of course ignored; yet considering the obligations under which Madame de Valois stood to the Cardinal, and the very intimate nature of their connection, such betrayal of the Queen's plot was almost obligatory. Perfectly conversant, as was

<sup>1</sup> Les La Mottes disposaient donc des voitures de la Cour, eux qui, assure-t-on, n'y étaient pas admis!"

"Comment explique-t-on cela? Mais on ne l'explique pas. On se borne à le passer dédaigneusement sous silence et tout est dit."

*Louis Combes.*

Madame de La Motte maintains that portions of this really honest witness' depositions have been suppressed or changed, and "La dernière pièce du fameux Collier", from the pen of a thorough anti-Valois author, contains an observation of similar character.



the Cardinal, with the Queen's appearance and bearing, the contemplated imposition would have seemed too hazardous for her to risk, too open to detection. Mere prudence, therefore, if no other motive, would have suggested the necessity of taking the Cardinal into her confidence in the manner she and her husband have explained.<sup>1</sup>

This appears the only conceivable solution of the "Bosquet" farce, in which—as Michelet observes—"there was nothing improbable; on the contrary it was quite in harmony with the well-known tastes of the Queen."

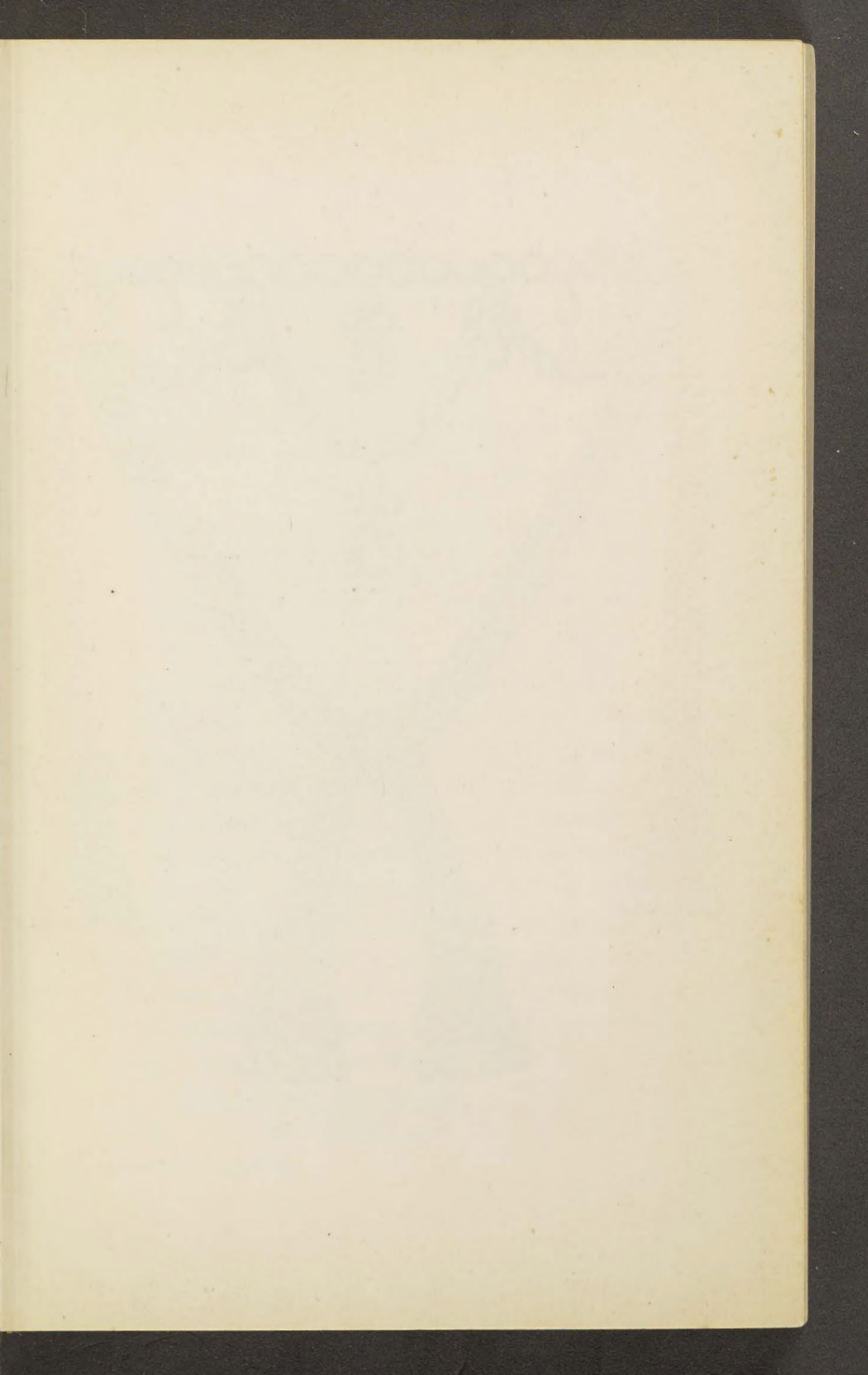
<sup>1</sup> The Count writes:—

"Le Cardinal était instruit du rôle que Mademoiselle d'Oliva allait jouer."

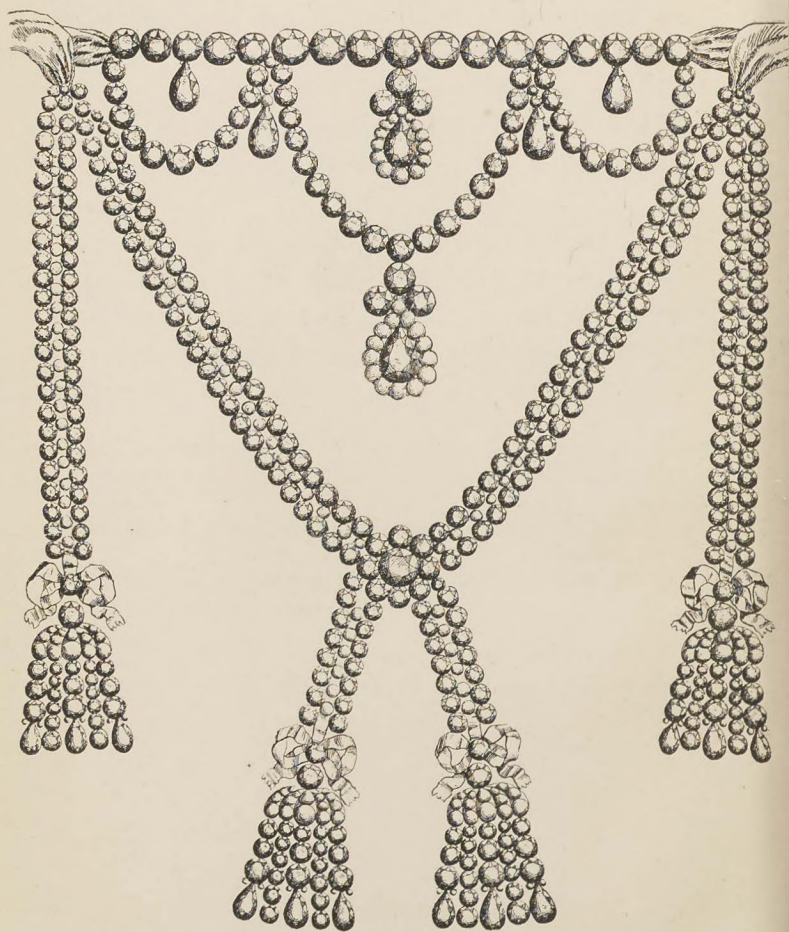
"Lettre du 22 Sept. 1790, trouvé parmi les papiers du roi."

*Soulavie* 73.  
6.

Georgel post-dates this scene in the park twelve months. Madame de Campan is altogether silent on the subject!







Reproduced from the original.  $\frac{1}{4}$  actual size.

## PART II.

### THE NECKLACE.

"Faites attention à ce misérable Collier, je ne serais nulle surpris qu'il ne renversât le trône."

*Talleyrand.*

"A glorious ornament, fit only for the Sultana of the world. Indeed, only attainable by such; for it is valued at 1,800,000 livres; say in round numbers and sterling money, between eighty and ninety thousand pounds."

*Carlyle.*

WE now make a plunge in "medias res". The past, with its fictions or facts as the case may be, was but the prologue serving to introduce our leading "dramatis personæ". We now come to the drama itself. If what has gone before somewhat taxes our comprehension, what has to follow will certainly not lessen the strain.

The Cardinal is officially represented an imbecile, in order that Madame de Valois may appear in sufficiently black colours. We have seen him exhibited as swallowing, through an apparently "insatiable gullet", the fictitious intimacy, fictitious correspondence, fictitious Queen;—and, on the strength of these fables, pouring untold wealth into the lap of the fair enchantress who wove the magic spell that prostrated his intellectual faculties.



Again are we called upon to assist at an exhibition of infantine credulity, of all-unquestioning faith,—a faith so blind, indeed, that it accepts the absurdest of signatures for the genuine sign-manual of royalty, and, on the strength of such flimsy authority, surrenders, into the hands of some imaginary envoy the most superb jewel the world had ever beheld.

“O sancta simplicitas”!

*The Neck-  
lace.*

Carlyle has given a highly figurative description of this unique production, sufficient to set every woman’s imagination in a blaze and her mouth watering. To complete the picture we have that more prosaic and rare engraving of the “gorgeous gem” published at the time of the trial, and still to be occasionally met with, figuring among the judicial documents.<sup>1</sup>

This “parure merveilleuse” was originally designed for Madame du Barry:—“that foul worm, hatched by royal heat, on foul composts, into a flaunting butterfly; now diswinged and again a worm!” as Carlyle designates, with more of strong-flavoured metaphor than politeness, or refinement, the then reigning favourite of the French monarch, Louis XV. “le bien aimé.”

Unfortunately for Madame du Barry, and also for MM. Boehmer and Bassenge, jewellers, who owned this wonderful jewel, their mutual patron, the fifteenth Louis, inopportunately died.

<sup>1</sup> Each brilliant there appears in its natural form and size. (In Author’s collection.)

His death we are assured, by His Reverence the Abbé Georgel, was more orthodox in character and more edifying than had been his life, which morally left much to be desired. Having made the "amende honorable" to God, and exhibited a praiseworthy devotion of three days' duration, this royal penitent "fell asleep in the Lord,"—as the Abbé expresses it.

"Asleep in the Lord, Monsieur l'Abbé!" exclaims Carlyle. "If such a mass of Laziness and Lust fell asleep in the Lord, *who*, fanciest thou, is it that falls asleep—elsewhere?"

The necklace was thus thrown on the hands of the jewellers, and jewellers have, as a rule, an eye to business. No poetical phantasma did this jewel present to their matter of fact vision, but just so much capital sunk and labour profitless. It was not, therefore, surprising, but only natural under the circumstances, that they should turn their eyes towards that fair young girl who had now become Queen, in the hope that she might be inclined, or induced, to relieve them of this truly royal adornment.

These hopes had, apparently, some legitimate grounds to rest on, for Marie Antoinette had "a fantasy" for jewelry, "a passion for diamonds."<sup>1</sup>

*The Queen's  
passion for  
diamonds.*

That a young girl should have a rage for jewelry

<sup>1</sup> Vienna Correspondence.



is not strange; that a new and rather wilful Queen, should indulge her humours and fantasies is only natural; that she should run into considerable extravagances is not very surprising. These and other tastes of Marie Antoinette are not inexcusable, far from it;—but it is quite inexcusable that facts should be systematically distorted, and that “goûts fastieux” should be transformed, by certain clever historical romancers, into—“une simplicité pastorale.”<sup>1</sup>

In reply to her mother’s remonstrances on the subject of her diamond extravagances, Marie Antoinette simply expresses surprise that so much fuss should be made about “pareilles bagatelles.”

*Nature of the question.* Madame de La Motte was accused, and eventually convicted, of having induced the Cardinal de Rohan, by false pretences and representations, to purchase the necklace ostensibly for the Queen; and of having then, deceitfully and artfully, obtained possession of it from the Cardinal and appropriated it to her own use.

*How the Necklace was acquired.* How was the necklace acquired? and how disposed of? These are the first points to take into consideration.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Within two years of becoming Queen her extravagances had reached so high a pitch as to call for serious remonstrances, even to necessitate an appeal from the Austrian Ambassador for her mother to interfere. Her “goût de dépenses”, her “dépenses désordonnées” were dangerously affecting her renown and the financial distress of the state.

*Vienna Correspondence.*

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix No. 5.

According to the depositions of the jewellers, the preliminary proceedings were as follow:—

*Depositions  
of the jew-  
ellers.*

Towards the end of December 1784, one Achet, an officer in the service of "Monsieur", the king's brother, and an old friend of the jewellers, deputed his son-in-law Laporte to sound the friendly dispositions of a certain "Dame de Valois, qui avait accès auprès de sa Majesté la Reine, qui daignait l'honorer de ses bontés."

Laporte happened to be rather intimate at the time with Madame de Valois, and the appeal was made, admittedly, at the immediate request of the jewellers,<sup>1</sup> with the avowed object of soliciting her interest to move the Queen to purchase the necklace.

The result did not prove quite so satisfactory as could have been desired. The lady "était indécise si elle ferait cette démarche." She showed, however, some natural curiosity to see the necklace.

*1st appeal to  
the Dame de  
Valois  
December  
1784.*

The jewellers were, of course, only too delighted to satisfy her curiosity, and accordingly Achet, accompanied by Bassenge, the junior partner, took the necklace on the 29th December, to the residence of Madame de La Motte, and again solicited her interest with the Queen; but Madame de Valois would give no positive promise, explaining

*2nd appeal  
29th Dec.*

<sup>1</sup> "A la prière des joailliers". *Target.*



that, however much she might desire to be of use to Bassenge, she did not like mixing herself up in the matter.

*3rd appeal  
21 January  
1785.* Three weeks passed by without the jewellers hearing anything further on the subject, and they naturally concluded that Madame de Valois did not choose to move in the matter. They expressed their disappointment to Achet and urged him to send Laporte again to see whether Madame de Valois could not be induced to vouchsafe a more favourable response.<sup>1</sup>

In reply to this third application Madame de La Motte requested the jeweller to call, and she informed Achet and Bassenge, on their arrival, that she had reason for thinking that they might eventually succeed in disposing of their necklace, and would probably receive more news in the course of a few days. She could say nothing further on the subject at present, she mysteriously added, but cautioned them to take every possible precaution in respect to any arrangements the negotiator, "un très-grand Seigneur," might propose.

*Observations on the depositions of the jewellers.*

From the foregoing account of the preliminary steps in the negotiation, which we have extracted from the jewellers' own "Mémoires," we glean some important facts.

Three applications were made by the jewellers to

<sup>1</sup> They told Achet that they would willingly give a thousand louis to anyone who should succeed in negotiating the sale.

Madame de Valois, to solicit her interest in their favour.

The motive of these appeals was the very general belief entertained of her intimate relations with the Queen.

The chief medium of communication was an officer in the service of the king's brother and about the Court; not likely, therefore, to have been easily duped by any simulated intimacy.

In reply to the first two appeals Madame de Valois declined to make any move in the matter.

An interval elapses of three weeks, unmarked by any sign on her part.

On a third application being then made by the impatient jewellers, Madame de La Motte gives them some hope, but cautions them to be very circumspect in their dealings in case of sale!<sup>1</sup>

It is perfectly clear that the idea of employing Madame de Valois as a medium of intercession with the Queen, originated with the jewellers. They took the initiative, sought her; and she figures in a purely passive rôle throughout.

For what took place during the interval of three weeks, between the 2nd and 3rd appeals, and for very much of all that subsequently occurred, we are unfor-

<sup>1</sup> If Madame de La Motte contemplated appropriating the necklace, why should she care to caution the jewellers? Why did she thus place an obstacle in her path calculated to risk the success of her plot? The easier the terms, the easier would the plunder have fallen into her hands. Provided the Cardinal got the necklace, would she have cared whether the jeweller got his money or not?



tunately obliged to fall back upon the statements of the Cardinal and Madame de Valois.

*Statements  
of the Car-  
dinal and  
Madame de  
Valois equal-  
ly suspicious.*

As a general rule the assertions of both Madame de La Motte and the Cardinal should be regarded as equally untrustworthy, and only admitted when supported by collateral evidence, or very strong probabilities. By comparing the stories of these two confederates we may be enabled sometimes to decide, or form an estimate, as to their relative claims to verisimilitude; but it is manifestly unjust when both defendants were evidently, *indeed confessedly*, lying to the very best of their abilities, to admit the mere "ipse dixit" of the Cardinal as conclusive evidence against Madame de Valois.

*Version of  
Madame de  
La Motte.*

The account given by Madame de La Motte of the preliminary proceedings does not differ materially from the depositions of the jeweller.

She then goes on to say that nearly three weeks having elapsed without any allusion to the subject of the necklace, the circumstance had well-nigh passed out of her mind when the Cardinal happened to drop in on a visit. He wore on his finger a remarkably fine diamond, a recent purchase, and this led the conversation to the necklace she had so lately seen.

Madame de La Motte continues:—

"Whereupon I told him nearly all I have just

related, relative to the solicitations of Laporte, Achet, and Boehmer.

"The Cardinal paid great attention and showed some surprise, observing 'Cela est très singulier; en avez-vous parlé à la Reine?'

"'Non, je n'ai pas voulu m'en charger.'

"'Infiniment singulier que ces gens se soyent adressés à vous. Et ils vous ont dit savoir que la Reine avait grande envie de ce collier.'

"'Ils me l'ont dit.'

"'J'ai quelques raisons de le croire.'

"The Cardinal then, rather abruptly, changed the conversation."

Two or three days afterwards the Cardinal applied to her for the address of the jewellers; whereupon, turning the matter over in her mind, she wondered whether His Eminence, whose embarrassed state of affairs was rather notorious, might be possibly contemplating "ce qu'on appelle une affaire,"—in other words procuring the necklace on credit, with the design of converting it into ready money,—and becoming rather alarmed lest she might be compromised in any way, having given the jewellers' address, she decided to give them a private caution, of the nature they have described in their depositions.

This step she looked upon as an act of mere prudence on her part.

Let us now turn to what the Cardinal says on the subject.

*The Cardinal's version.*



He declares that on his return from Saverne, on the 5th January, Madame de La Motte showed him a note from the Queen,<sup>1</sup> in which her Majesty expressed herself as being desirous of acquiring the necklace, but privately, and not wishing to enter personally into any of the details of purchase etc., that it would be agreeable to her if the Cardinal would undertake the necessary arrangements, and fix the epochs for payment, as might be most convenient.

"Il crût sans balancer; il se prépara donc à obéir, et n'aperçut qu'une occasion précieuse de marquer son respect et montrer son zèle."

So pleads his advocate, M. Target.

Georgel says the Cardinal was summoned by letter from Saverne specially for this object, and "His Eminence longs for wings that he may ex-

<sup>1</sup> The Cardinal on his defence, pretended that the Queen's notes were addressed to Madame de La Motte, in fact denied having ever corresponded with Marie Antoinette.

Campardon says:

"Le Cardinal prétendit que Madame de La Motte lui montrait des lettres de Marie Antoinette à elle adressées; que ces lettres contenaient les ordres qui l'avaient déterminé à acheter le collier."

The Cardinal's advocate excuses this subterfuge as "une nécessité de position."

Georgel *acknowledges* that the Cardinal, when in the Bastille, was much troubled as to what had become of his letters to the Queen, and confessed that their nature was such that they were alone sufficient to compass his destruction. Beugnot, who assisted in destroying innumerable letters and papers of Madame de Valois, the eve of her arrest, did not come across a single one of these letters; this would rather indicate they had reached their intended destination.

ecute the Queen's commission with the greater despatch."

This letter conveying the summons has never, of course, been forthcoming, and as regards the Abbé's metaphorical wings, it is evident, when we come to deal with facts, the Cardinal adopted a very singular way of manifesting his vaunted eagerness. Arriving on the 5th January, as we have seen, he did not open any negotiations till the 24th; taking, in fact, about three weeks to make up his mind whether he would or would not seize this precious opportunity of exhibiting his respect and zeal.

However, at the expiration of nearly three weeks, namely on the 24th January, the Cardinal makes his appearance at the establishment of MM. Boëhmer and Bas-senge, and asks to look at "divers bijoux;" the jewellers of course taking advantage of the opportunity to exhibit their necklace.

*He opens the  
negotiations  
24 January  
1785.*

The Cardinal then mysteriously opens negotiations; acknowledges he is commissioned to inquire the lowest price that would be taken for the necklace; that it was not for himself, and that he was not sure he would be permitted to name the purchaser, in which case he would make "des arrangements particuliers"; but his instructions were to treat with Boëhmer alone. On the manifest impossibility being pointed out, of completing so important a negotiation with only one of the partners, the Cardinal said he should be obliged



to refer for further authority, and the interview came to an end.<sup>1</sup>

*2nd Inter-  
view, 26th  
January.*

Two days afterwards the jewellers are sent for, when the Cardinal informs them he has permission to treat with both, under, however, the express condition of the greatest secrecy.

*Agreement  
signed (for  
29th Jan.)*

The terms of the agreement, drawn up in the Cardinal's own handwriting, are thereupon duly signed by the jewellers, "sous la date du 29 janvier," or three days in advance,—why so?

No explanation is vouchsafed!

*The Neck-  
lace deliver-  
ed over to  
Cardinal, 1st  
Feb. 1785.*

On the 1st February, 1785, or five days after the agreement was signed, both jewellers wait upon the Cardinal by invitation, and hand over into his keeping the necklace. He then, for the first time, acquainted them of the circumstance that the Queen was the real purchaser, and exhibited the Agreement "approved" and signed, "Marie Antoinette de France." This document, he explained, he should have to keep in his own possession, and, in support of what he said, showed the jewellers part of a note, folded so that

<sup>1</sup> This restriction is remarkable. The Cardinal's referee was either the Queen or Madame de Valois, according as the correspondence was genuine or a forgery. We know that Marie Antoinette had on previous occasions transacted business with Boehmer; this might account for her being desirous that any private transaction should be negotiated solely through him; but why should Madame de La Motte give any such limitation? She was not even personally acquainted with Boehmer.

they could only read the following words:—"je n'ai pas coutume de traiter de cette manière avec mes joailliers. Vous garderez ce papier chez vous et arrangerez le reste comme vous le jugerez convenable." This note, he told them, was from the Queen.<sup>1</sup>

The acquisition of the necklace was a "fait accompli", and by the terms of agreement the first instalment of 400,000 frs. was to be paid in August.<sup>2</sup>

The Cardinal's advocate starts by advancing that "a criminal hand had certainly traced the characters of an august name in order to obtain, by means of that name, a rich suite of diamonds."

*The non-descript signature and its origin.*

The signature, therefore, is forged in order to obtain possession of the necklace.

But it is equally urged<sup>3</sup> that the name of the Queen was never mentioned by the Cardinal until *after* he was in possession of the necklace.

Of course, under such circumstances, the signature would have been useless to him, and the evident object of his advocate was to show that the signature was forged subsequently by Madame de Valois to deceive the Cardinal, and thus induce him to part with the jewel.

<sup>1</sup> Deposition of Bassenge.

<sup>2</sup> The secret negotiation is completed in February 1785, and the appointment, by the Queen, of Böhmer to the post of Crown jeweller is dated March, 1785. The coincidence is curious.

<sup>3</sup> "Pour obtenir le Collier, il n'a point parlé de la Reine. Quand il le possède, il en parle pour la première fois." *Target.*



This argument, however, will not bear the slightest scrutiny.

The jewellers signed on the 26th and the bargain was complete. Why then was not the necklace at once handed over to the Cardinal? Why was the Agreement dated the 29th, i. e. three days in advance, and the necklace not delivered up till the 1st? Why this unnecessary delay of five days on the part of one "so impatient to execute his commission with the greatest despatch"?

*Madame de Valois' explanations and confessions regarding it.* The answer is plain enough; the jewellers did require the signature of the Queen. The caution of Madame de La Motte had borne fruit, and they refused to part with their necklace unless the Queen's signature was appended to the document; so the Cardinal had to bring the Agreement to Madame de Valois, to convey to H. M. for signature. The Queen, however, refused to sign though it was submitted twice with that view.

Hence the delay of five days!

The second refusal, however, was accompanied, Madame de La Motte explains, by certain observations on the part of H. M. of an ambiguous, if not suggestive, character; anyhow, Madame de La Motte interpreted them after her own fashion, since she confesses to having got Villette to affix the "approuve" and nondescript signature, without, however, attempting to imitate the Queen's autograph. *This latter point is admitted.*

It is unnecessary here to discuss the excuses Madame de La Motte offers for her conduct in this matter. We are not defending her acts, but simply inquiring into facts without criticising their morality. We leave that to the students of ethics. It is quite enough for our purpose that Madame de La Motte acknowledges having suggested the nondescript autograph and having got Villette to execute it; the Cardinal joining, as an accessory, in thus deceiving the jewellers who were unacquainted with the ordinary signature of the Queen.

Yet it is pretended that His Eminence himself accepted the same for genuine. This signature is pronounced "*absurd*," "*grotesque*"; the result of "*the grossest ignorance*" and only serving "*to expose the duplicity*" of its inventor. The imposition, in short, is palpable to everybody—except the Cardinal!

His advocate is forced to admit that this was "simply astounding."

Rather too astounding indeed for belief. The plea of innocence on the part of the Cardinal is inadmissible. He was evidently an accomplice as Madame de Valois maintains.

The Cardinal, we see, received the necklace in its integrity. What became of it? Into whose hands did it fall when it passed out of his keeping?

*The necklace handed over to—whom?*

This point still remains a mystery unsolved, all vaunted elucidations notwithstanding.



The Cardinal offers the following explanation :

On the same day he received the necklace he took it to Versailles to deliver to the Queen. Arrived there, he goes—in accordance with instructions, genuine or spurious as the case may be, from the Queen,—to the apartments of Madame de La Motte.

*The mysterious envoy.*

Very shortly afterwards,<sup>1</sup> an envoy is announced on the part of H. M., and bearer of a note. His counsel explains what then occurred, thus :

“Le Cardinal se retire, par discrétion, dans une alcove à demi ouverte; l’homme remet le billet; la dame de La Motte le fit sortir un moment, se rapproche de M. le Cardinal, lui lit ce billet portant ordre de remettre la boîte au porteur. On le fait rentrer, la boîte lui est livrée, et il part.”<sup>2</sup>

“M. le Cardinal croit y voir le dernier acte d’une commission fidèlement remplie.”

The Cardinal, therefore, had come from Paris to deliver the necklace in person to the Queen; but no sooner does her messenger present himself than His Eminence hides—“par discrétion.”

Yet he at once confidingly hands over to this person the equivalent of one million eight hundred thousand francs.

Who was the messenger? Did the Cardinal know the individual whom he so confidingly trusted?

<sup>1</sup> “Peu de moments après.”

<sup>2</sup> This “lui lit ce billet” is amusing. Was it also “par discrétion” that the Cardinal did not think of reading the note himself?!

Driven here into a corner by questions he did not wish to answer, the Cardinal explains that he *imagined* him to be the same person, "habillé en noir", who warned the actors in the "bosquet" comedy of the approach of "Madame" and the Countess d'Artois.

The Cardinal thus endeavours to bring Villette upon the scene, but—as we have already seen—he took no immediate share in the mystification proceedings; moreover, the Cardinal himself supplies the best proof that this envoy could not have been Villette.

When asked to describe his personal appearance he completely contradicts his previous deposition by giving a description quite the reverse of Villette. This is admitted.<sup>1</sup>

The description, in fact, answered to that of Lesclaux, the Queen's confidential valet. This, of course, was a very awkward difficulty, a difficulty only to be met by trying to invent some plausible explanation; consequently it is *suggested* Villette *might* have been disguised so as to resemble the Queen's valet.

*The Queen's  
valet,  
Lesclaux.*

*Contradict-  
ory explana-  
tions.*

M. Campardon starts by boldly asserting that the messenger was none other than Villette in masquerade; "whom Rosalie, Madame de La Motte's lady's maid, admitted that same evening at 11 o'clock."<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> "It is true that a striking difference existed between the individual described by the Cardinal, and Rétaux de Villette." *Vizetelly.*

<sup>2</sup> "A qui la femme de chambre, Rosalie Briffault, ouvrait la porte ce soir-là à onze heures et qu'elle introduisait dans l'appartement."

*Campardon. 77.*



hour of delivering over the necklace, therefore, must have evidently been after 11 p. m.

Let us see how this explanation agrees with facts as detailed by Campardon himself, by Georgel, and by the Cardinal.

Campardon makes use of the expression "*vers le soir*" for the time the Cardinal arrived at the apartments of Madame de Valois, and then proceeds to tell us that he *had scarcely entered*<sup>1</sup> when Madame de Valois announced the arrival of the Queen's confidential valet.

Georgel relates that the Cardinal—duly advised of the hour named for the delivery of the necklace—entered the apartments of Madame de Valois "*le premier février sur la brune*".

The text of the Queen's note, making the appointment, named 9 o'clock,<sup>2</sup> and the Cardinal's version introduces the envoy "*peu de moments après*".

It is, therefore, manifestly impossible to bring Villette upon the scene of the delivery of the necklace since he did not enter the house till (11 p. m.) long after it had been handed over to the keeping of the Queen's envoy.<sup>3</sup> Every attempt to identify this man with

<sup>1</sup> "Était à peine entré."

<sup>2</sup> "This evening at 9 o'clock you must be at the Countess' house with the casket, and in the usual costume. Do not leave till you hear from me."  
*Vizetelly.*

Is not the expression "in the usual costume" curiously suggestive of prior meetings?

<sup>3</sup> "Vers le soir", "sur la brune", of an evening in the month of February, can scarcely be extended to 11 at night!

Villette has signally failed. The Cardinal, Georgel, Campardon, d'Oliva, Villette and Madame de Valois,—all depose or contribute evidence to prove the contrary.

Madame de Valois maintains that the Cardinal was perfectly well acquainted with the envoy, who was none other than the “valet-de-chambre de confiance de la Reine”, and that he received the casket from the Cardinal's own hands.<sup>1</sup>

From this point of view the entire aspect of the transaction changes, and becomes intelligible, and natural. The Cardinal hands over the necklace to a well-known trustworthy agent; the absurdities vanish, and we can more readily recognise “le dernier acte d'une commission fidèlement remplie.”

The necklace vanished, never again to re-appear. Month after month glides by without, apparently, any suspicions arising to disturb the general satisfaction and perfect security of all who were interested in the affair. The Cardinal indubitably believed the necklace had passed into the possession of the Queen. He neither doubted the personality of the envoy nor the reality of the transference. This point forms the essence of his defence, and all his subsequent actions are in unison with such

*The calm  
before the  
storm.*

<sup>1</sup> M. Louis Blanc writes:—“Le messenger était valet-de-chambre de la Reine, il se nommait Lesclaux, et l'on doit supposer que le cardinal le connaissait puis qu'il lui remit sans hésitation, sans information prise, sans reçu signé, une boîte qui ne contenait pas moins d'un million six cent mille livres.”



conviction,—a conviction that remained unshaken to the very last.

The Cardinal *believed*, and Madame de Valois *maintained* that Marie Antoinette received the necklace. This, of course, the champions of the Queen stoutly deny, and no evidence is, unfortunately, forthcoming to *decide* the point.

But their zeal carries them further, and they affirm she knew nothing whatever about the negotiations, which had been carried on in her name, till the intrigue became public.

It is easy to expose the fallacy of this pretence even by their own admissions.

*St. James' interview with Cardinal, Feb. 1785.* It appears that the opulent banker St. James had, sometime previously, advanced the jewellers a very considerable sum (800,000 frs.) on the security of their necklace, and this loan expired the very same month it was delivered to the Cardinal. They therefore solicited their creditor to extend the time for repayment from February to August, explaining their motive for making the application by confiding to him the private purchase of the necklace just effected by the Queen, through the agency of de Rohan, to whom they referred the banker.

*St. James cautions the Queen in Feb.* St. James, thereupon, made a point of seeing the Cardinal on the subject, who at once confirmed what the jewellers had stated; it is also admitted that St. James

then made it his business to acquaint the Queen that the jewellers "were pretending that their necklace had been purchased by her."<sup>1</sup>

Madame Campan acknowledges that, after his interview with the Cardinal, the banker thought it his duty to reveal to H. M. the confidences that had been made to him respecting "the bargain that had been effected with Boehmer," and she suggests "légèreté", in the manner of this communication, by way of offering some excuse for the strange behaviour of Marie Antoinette regarding these "confidences".

*Madame  
Campan's  
version and  
observations  
on this head.*

The Queen's conduct, certainly, under the circumstances, and also her subsequent bearing towards the jewellers, appear curiously inconsistent, not to say suspicious, and her sincerity very questionable.

*Inconsistent  
conduct of  
the Queen.*

The confidential communication conveyed by St. James was to the effect that *the bargain had been effected, and the necklace sold to the Queen.*<sup>2</sup>

If the report were unfounded, what more simple than to fathom the source of such a strange error by sending for the jeweller?

The Queen, however, pretended that St. James had given her to understand that the jewellers were still

<sup>1</sup> Campardon. St. James' motive in thus bringing the circumstance to the notice of the Queen was, doubtless, of a personal nature;—namely to satisfy himself as to the reality of a transaction in which he was so deeply interested.

<sup>2</sup> Campan and Campardon.



nursing the hope of selling her the necklace, and that out of regard for her personal tranquillity<sup>1</sup> she ought to institute inquiries etc. She dismissed the subject very shortly by simply directing Madame Campan to "ask Boehmer the first time she might happen to meet him, what he had done with the necklace."

Now it is manifest that if the Queen had only been told that the jewellers still hoped to sell her the necklace, there would have been nothing novel in the communication; nothing of a confidential nature, or demanding any caution; and since she acknowledges being warned that "her personal tranquillity" was at stake, and inquiries urgent, it is sufficiently evident that the nature of the confidence was very different from what she pretended.

However, Madame Campan—as directed—had an interview with Boehmer on the subject, who informed her that the necklace was sold.

*First interview of Madame Campan with Boehmer Feb. 1785.* This interview Madame Campan herself proves took place in the month of February; for it appears she had a subsequent interview with him on the 3rd August, which is duly retailed, and in the course of their conversation she pointedly alludes to that prior interview, "il y a six mois", consequent upon the caution given by St. James; the previous interview, therefore, must have been in February.

Madame Campan, indeed, fixes this date with yet

<sup>1</sup> "Pour sa propre tranquillité."

more certainty:—"La chose la plus embarrassante"—she admits—"pour le Cardinal fut l'entretien qu'il avait eu, en février 1785, avec M. de Saint James, à qui il avait confié les détails de la prétendue commission de la Reine."

Both Madame Campan and M. Campan, therefore, clearly show that the Queen was made acquainted with the reported acquisition of the necklace for her the very same month it was effected.

*The Queen informed of the purchase at the time it occurred.*

We have further corroboration of this fact from the Abbé Georgel, who tells us the jewellers themselves brought the matter

*Georgel in corroboration.*

to the notice of the Queen at a very early date. The purchase having been effected so mysteriously, it was manifestly an object of the highest importance for them to ascertain that the necklace had actually passed into her possession.

This he maintains they did, and further that they seized "a very early opportunity" of thanking H. M. in presence of the Abbé Vermond, whom they knew to be in her confidence.

This evidence was not allowed to figure at the trial.<sup>1</sup>

We can readily understand how important it was to suppress this interview!

Towards the end of June, we are told—but this date appears very problematical—

*The 200,000 frs. reduction.*

<sup>1</sup> The jewellers "furent obligés de taire ce qu'il—M. de Bréteuil—ne voulait pas qu'ils déclarassent." *Georgel*, "Mémoires pour servir".



*Official version.* the Cardinal receives one of those contested billets from the Queen, containing the demand for a reduction of 200,000 frs. in the price agreed upon, "otherwise it would be returned on the hands of the jeweller."

Whether the note in question came from the Queen or from Madame de Valois, the demand was certainly most extraordinary.

The necklace had been some five months in possession. Admitting, for the moment, that Madame de La Motte had appropriated it, as assumed, what possible interest, or object could she have had in abating the price? If the jewellers consent she gains nothing—not even time. If they refuse the result would be exposure, since she would have had to restore an object already broken up and a portion converted into money.

What possible motive, therefore, could Madame de Valois have had for forging such a note?

M. Campardon can only reply: "Pour compliquer un peu la situation."

As if it were not complicated enough already!<sup>1</sup>

*Version of Madame de La Motte.* It would certainly be equally difficult to conceive the Queen making any such demand at the eleventh hour as pretended; but Madame de Valois asserts that this abatement was demanded "about a month after the Queen was

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Vizetelly passes over this incident without any comment.

in possession of the Collar,"—certainly a far more probable story.

Moreover, Georgel informs us that the jewellers referred to this in that "*very early*" interview with H. M., which they were forbidden by the minister, de Breteuil, to divulge. *Corroborated by Abbé Georgel.*

These two statements, therefore, agree, and corroborate one the other.

However, certain revised arrangements were undoubtedly made, by which it was covenanted that 700,000 frs. instead of 400,000 frs. should be paid the jewellers on the 1st August, in consideration of this reduction. *Revised arrangements.*

No postponement of the date for payment, but an augmentation, by 300,000 frs., of the amount to be paid; and this is laid at the door of Madame de La Motte,—why?

"To complicate the situation"?!

On the 12th July the jewellers presented the following note to the Queen: *Jewellers' letter 12th July.*

"Madame, nous sommes au comble du bonheur d'oser penser que les derniers arrangements qui nous ont été proposés, et auxquels nous nous sommes soumis avec zèle et respect, sont une nouvelle preuve de notre soumission et dévouement aux ordres de Votre Majesté, et nous avons une vraie satisfaction de penser que la plus belle parure de diamants qui existe servira à la plus belle et à la meilleure des Reines."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is assumed, officially, that this note refers to the abatement of the 200,000 frs.; but, since that incident evidently occurred some



This letter was dictated, or corrected by the Cardinal. "The Queen"—writes Madame Campan—"entered the library, where I was skimming over the pages of some book. She held the note in her hand. She read it out to me, remarking that, since I had that morning solved the enigmas in the *Mercur*, I could doubtless interpret the meaning of the enigma that 'ce fou de Bœhmer' had just sent her.

"Unintelligible, enigmatical, requiring in fact explanation; yet the Queen burnt the note, at a handy bougie, observing:—'Cela ne vaut pas la peine d'être gardé'."

One would, certainly, have imagined that the simplest way of solving the enigma was to keep the note and send for Bœhmer to explain matters. *This Madame Campan suggested*, but the Queen replied that it was not necessary.

months previous, it more probably had reference to the following.

About the middle of July the Cardinal learnt, directly or indirectly as the case may be, that the Queen had disposed of the 700,000 frs. due next month for the first instalment, and consequently that payment would have to be postponed two months longer; but that 30,000 frs. would be forthcoming to date by way of interest.

It is pretended that Madame de Valois herself provided these 30,000 frs., and gave them to the Cardinal on the 30 July as a blind to prolong her fraud:—"to reassure alike the Cardinal and the jewellers"—"to perpetuate the delusion of the Cardinal"—"pour perpétuer son erreur."

*Vizetelly and Campardon.*

In one of the Queen's notes—as given by Madame de Valois—dated 19 July, reference is made to her having previously mentioned her disposal of the 700,000 frs. and to the remittance of 30,000 frs. by way of remuneration for the payment being delayed.

The dates, therefore, correspond, or fit in.

We now arrive at the 3rd August, 1785, *The eventful*  
 an eventful and not over-pleasant day for *3 Aug. 1785.*  
 the unfortunate jewellers.

The Queen had burnt their note of the 12th July as not worth keeping, and declined the suggestion of a personal interview.

She was, evidently, in no hurry for any explanations.

Three weeks pass by when Madame Campan chanced to run across Bœhmer, and the conversation that ensued is very remarkable as well as highly instructive.

Madame Campan gave Bœhmer to understand that the Queen could not make anything of their note of the 12th July; that H. M. knew nothing about any negotiations for the purchase of the necklace or of its acquisition; that there must certainly be some mistake on his part, or else he must have been grossly taken in, etc.

*2nd inter-  
 view between  
 Madame  
 Campan and  
 Bœhmer,  
 3rd Aug.  
 1785.*

But Bœhmer retorts that it is she, Madame Campan, who is mistaken, not he; that she, evidently, was not admitted to the Queen's confidence in the matter, who—he explained—was merely playing a part in feigning ignorance; that the note was perfectly intelligible to H. M. since she had undoubtedly purchased the necklace through the medium of the Cardinal; further that the Queen was really on very good terms with his Eminence, though publicly pretending not to be so, etc.



The particulars of this interview Madame Campan duly retails to her royal Mistress the first opportunity.<sup>1</sup>

*Boehmer denied an audience.*

Now it is quite clear that Marie Antoinette shunned facing the jeweller at this time, for it appears she had refused to see Boehmer, who presented himself at the Trianon immediately after this conversation, soliciting an audience. It was not until Madame Campan, when retailing, subsequently, the particulars of the interview, earnestly entreated H. M. to receive him, urging that her personal interests were really in question, etc.—it was then only that the Queen yielded, and sent for the jeweller.

*Boehmer in the Queen's presence, 9th Aug.*

The scene that took place on his arrival is almost incredible.

Marie Antoinette had been informed, first through the medium of Saint James, and now again directly by Madame Campan, that the necklace was stated to have been purchased by her through the agency of the Cardinal; yet with this fact ringing in her ears she commenced by inquiring: "Par

<sup>1</sup> It is evident Boehmer must have immediately informed the Cardinal of this interview, for we have a memorandum in His Eminence's handwriting to that effect, which was found at the Hôtel de Strasbourg, where it had been overlooked.

"On this day, 3 August, Boehmer went to Madame Campan's country house, and she told him that the Queen had never had the necklace, and that he had been cheated."

*Vizetelly.*

This was a warning quite sufficient to open the Cardinal's eyes had Madame de La Motte deceived him, as pretended, and appropriated the necklace.

quelle fatalité elle avait encore à entendre parler de sa folle prétention de lui vendre un objet, etc.?"<sup>1</sup>

Saint James had warned her, Bœhmer had written, Madame Campan had repeated all the details of her late conversation with Bœhmer,—still the Queen does not comprehend that the jewel is sold!

Or pretends that she does not?<sup>2</sup>

Bœhmer, anyhow, thought the Queen was mocking him, for he addresses H. M. thus:—

“Madame, il n'est plus temps de feindre. Daignez avouer que vous avez mon collier, et faites-moi donner des secours ou ma banqueroute aura bientôt tout dévoilé.”

Bœhmer certainly exhibited in energetic language “his determination to be no longer trifled with, even by royalty itself.”

Surprises spring up as we proceed in our examination of this conventional fiasco, and we are fully prepared for such; but that any subject, more especially one so graced by the royal favour, should have had the audacity to give vent to such insolence in bearing and language, and that any royal lady, having no cause for self-reproach, should have quietly borne it,—such a surprise is rather bewildering.

<sup>1</sup> “On ne pourrait trop s'étonner de l'opionâtreté de la reine à s'imaginer qu'on veut lui vendre le collier, quand tout le monde lui crie aux oreilles qu'on le lui a vendu.” *Louis Combes.*

<sup>2</sup> Il est évident que la reine se moquait de lui en feignant de croire qu'il plaiderait de nouveau pour la vente de son Collier.”

*Louis Combes.*



*Reported  
confession by  
Madame de  
Valois to  
Bassenge, 3  
Aug.*

On this same 3 Aug. Madame de Valois is represented as having, voluntarily, confessed her fraud on the Cardinal to Bassenge, by telling him the signature to their security was supposititious. Why so unmeaning a move on her part? M. Target is unable to reply, and can only suggest:—"Pour hâter la conclusion".

Yet, only three or four days previous, Madame de Valois was credited with having sacrificed 30,000 frs. to delay the chance of her fraud being discovered; to reassure the Cardinal, throw dust in his eyes, and "perpetuate his delusion".<sup>1</sup>

*And Bas-  
senge's inter-  
view with  
the Car-  
dinal.*

It is scarcely worth while discussing the point; it is really too absurd, especially when we are further asked to believe that Bassenge, trembling for the safety of his 1,600,000 frs., rushed off to the Cardinal "to give expression to his inquietudes and ask for explanations"; but that his inquietudes and contemplated demand for explanation practically evaporated in smoke; that the jeweller never breathed a word about the untoward "confession"—sole object of the interview!<sup>2</sup>

*Cardinal's  
eyes opened  
to Madame  
Valois' pre-  
sumed dupli-  
city, 3 Aug.*

This was even rather too strong for M. Campardon to adopt. He consequently holds that the Cardinal was, anyhow, then made fully aware how completely he had been hood-winked and duped by Madame de

<sup>1</sup> Vizetelly. "Pour perpetuer son erreur."

*Campardon.*

<sup>2</sup> Target. He does not, however, of course, say anything about the

La Motte. Such, at least, is the latest orthodox theory, and the Cardinal's memorandum of the 3rd August shows that, if Madame de La Motte had deceived him in the way suggested, his eyes were by this time sufficiently opened to her fraudulent conduct.

Such being the case, we might naturally anticipate some explosion of wrath on the part of the duped Cardinal, against the author of his humiliation and shame,—against that “*monstre d'ingratitude et d'imposture.*”

But he has no upbraidings whatever to offer; on the contrary, the same evening, or following morning, he takes under his immediate and special protection this *causa causans* of his social disgrace; receives into his own house this “monster of ingratitude and imposture.”<sup>1</sup>

*Jeanne  
spends two  
days in the  
Palais Car-  
dinal, Aug.  
4 and 5.*

Madame de La Motte explains the motive of this strange move on the part of His Eminence. He importuned her and her husband, she says, to spend a few days under his roof, with the ulterior design, as it proved, of persuading them, “*en ami,*” to retire for some months to one of his estates on the other side of the Rhine; his object—only too plain—being to get them out of the way, fearing any indiscretions on their part; also that their seeming flight to a distant

Cardinal's solemn declaration to Bassenge that *he had treated directly with the Queen*, in regard to the necklace, and not through any *intermedium*. This came out, however, in the trial.

<sup>1</sup> Target.



country might, in case of need or accidents, draw suspicion upon them.

There is much to support this statement. It appears the Cardinal undoubtedly did send his private secretary, Carbonnières, to escort Madame Jeanne to the Palais Cardinal,<sup>1</sup> and the Abbé Georgel further admits that he did propose to send her over to his estates beyond the Rhine.

These admissions tend to show that Madame de La Motte has given the true version of this incident. But the Count and his wife had no idea of availing themselves of the Cardinal's benevolent offer of a retreat beyond the Rhine; so after a visit of a couple of days they leave the "Palais Cardinal" for their own country house, to inaugurate the festivities of their new home at Bar-sur-Aube.

*The La Mot-  
tes at Bar-  
sur-Aube.  
Aug. 1785.* "They had been long looking forward to spending the present autumn in their new abode, which was rapidly becoming a model of elegance and taste."<sup>2</sup>

The Count had written to his friend Macdermott, in London, to send over to Bar-sur-Aube, "where he was going to reside", the jewels he left to be mounted, with Gray of Bond Street.<sup>3</sup>

"Here they received and returned visits in tranquil security."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Campardon.

<sup>2</sup> Vizetelly.

<sup>3</sup> "Pièces Justif. pour le Cardinal."

<sup>4</sup> Vizetelly.

"Neither husband nor wife showed the least sign of inquietude. They kept an excellent table and gave a succession of fêtes."<sup>1</sup>

Yet we are told that "the mine was on the point of being sprung, and the Valois feared that the explosion would take place before she could make good her retreat."<sup>2</sup>

A question naturally arises as we reach this point of our enquiry.

How came the affair to be made public? *How the affair be-*

With such high interests at stake, why *came public.* was it not quietly hushed up? The Cardinal having, confessedly, been egregiously duped, why did he unnecessarily publish his imbecility?

"Once fairly undeceived, it became evident that the necklace was lost and must be paid for. Nothing, in fact, remained but to come to terms with the jewellers and hush up the affair."

So writes M. Campardon; and the stereotyped version clearly proves that the Cardinal's eyes had been most effectually opened to the presumed duplicity of Madame Jeanne fully eight days before the jewellers laid the matter before the King on the 12 August. This is admitted.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Beugnot.

<sup>2</sup> Vizetelly.

<sup>3</sup> M. Target even tells us that *about the middle of July* the Cardinal chanced, for the first time, to come across some bonâ fide letters of Marie Antoinette, when struck by their unwonted character, he exclaimed:—"Je suis trompé!" But what of that? Jeanne the enchant-



How, then, was it that no steps were taken to enter into some arrangement with the jewellers, who would only have been too glad to come to terms?

The Cardinal's conviction that the Queen had the necklace rested—we are assured—solely on his blind infatuation and faith in Madame de Valois; yet he is exhibited as equally confident, and taking no steps to compromise the affair, after he had been made fully aware of this lady's presumed treachery, which "had fallen upon him like a thunderbolt."<sup>1</sup>

The Cardinal is thoroughly "*undecieved*" as regards Madame de Valois; still does he persist in ignoring every act of treachery imputed to her; still does he persist in maintaining his direct personal relations with Marie Antoinette, and in re-asserting that she had the necklace; and *he persisted in doing so to the very last.*

The jewellers did not present the memorial to the King till the 12 August. There was, therefore, abundance of time to hush up the affair by engaging to pay for the Collar as suggested; yet the Cardinal takes no action whatever towards satisfying them, though, as he was well aware, they were in direct communication on the subject with the minister, de Breteuil, his bitterest foe.

ress speaks, and, at the sound of her magic voice, he disbelieves the evidence of his own eyes, and restores her his entire confidence. This was when she brought the 30,000 frs. for interest (30th July). "Il en conclut que ses yeux ont été trompé", pleads Target.

<sup>1</sup> Georgel.

How account for this?

There is only one explanation. The Cardinal was not at any time "disillusioned" as pretended, and for the simple reason that he had never been really deceived by Madame Valois. Whatever her "disclosures" to Bassenge may have been, they were no "disclosures" to him, no "confession," or revelation of treachery on her part. He was an evident accomplice to the fraudulent signature.

This supplies what is wanting to explain the strange bearing, and otherwise inexplicable conduct of the Cardinal de Rohan throughout; and he must have had very good reasons of his own, *quite independent of Jeanne de Valois*, for feeling so perfectly satisfied that the Queen had had the necklace and would, eventually, pay on the 1st October, as finally arranged; that date, however, was still some distance off.

But the jewellers had no such confidence to rest on, did not know whom or what to believe, and were, naturally, getting into an agony of uncertainty about their million and a half. De Breteuil offered the one inducement that was necessary to loosen their tongues—"assured them they should be paid for their necklace."

Instigated by him, they presented their "Mémoire" to the King, on the 12th August.<sup>1</sup>

*The jewellers memorialise the King, 12th Aug. 1785.*

The affair consequently became public.

<sup>1</sup> Vizetelly.



## PART III.

### THE TRIAL.

"Le procès fut un jeu."

*Michelet.*

"Pendant dix mois les avocats firent des Mémoires, et ce qui était inexplicable finit par devenir inexplicable."

*A. Renée.*

*The Cardinal summoned before the King.*

It was the 15 August, 1785, the festival of the Assumption, and the Court was in attendance in the Grand Gallery of Versailles, awaiting the arrival of royalty on its way to the customary Mass, when the Cardinal—who was present "en rochet et en camail", surrounded by his officiating priesthood—received an unexpected summons to the King's cabinet, and there found himself in the immediate presence of the royal couple, of the Baron de Breteuil, of the Count de Vergennes, and the "garde-des-sceaux", Miromesnil.

Madame Campan has given her version of what took place at this improvised court of inquiry, an account her readers would naturally take for an authentic description of the scene "d'après le souvenir des confidences de sa maîtresse". Nothing of the kind;





LOUIS RENÉ ÉDOUARD

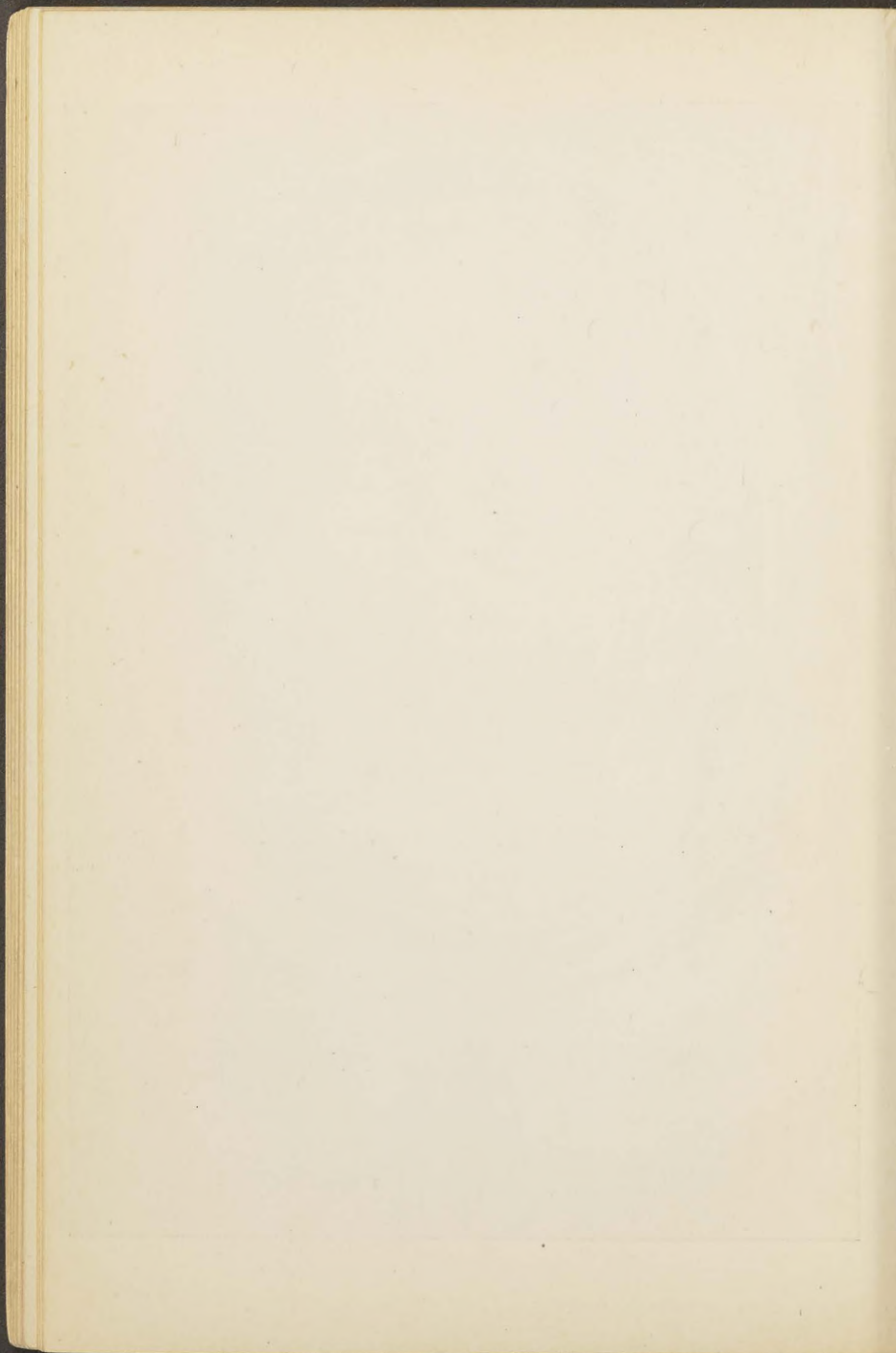
*Comte Cardinal  
Prêtre Prince de Strasbourg Land  
Savant des Princes Comman-  
dant de l'Ordre de Saint-Esprit*



PRINCE DE ROHAN,

*de la S<sup>te</sup> Eglise Romaine,  
Grand Maître Prince de l'Empire Et  
de l'Ordre du St-Esprit en 1774  
en 1784*





Madame Campan has simply borrowed her details, almost verbatim, from the columns of "Le Journal des Débats". In the portions interpolated she exhibits her customary errors, "volontaires ou involontaires".<sup>1</sup>

The account given in the "Débats" is as follows, omitting the interpolations "à la Campan".

*Version of  
the "Journal des  
Débats."*

"Lorsque la Cardinal fut entré, le roi lui dit:—

"'Vous avez acheté des diamants à Boehmer?'

"'Oui, Sire.'

"'Qu'en avez-vous fait?'

"'Je croyais qu'ils avaient été remis à la Reine.'

"'Qui vous avait chargé de cette commission?'

"'Une dame de condition, appelée Madame la Comtesse de La Motte-Valois, qui m'a présenté une lettre de la Reine, et j'ai cru faire ma cour à sa Majesté en me chargeant de cette négociation.'

"Alors la Reine interrompit:

"'Comment, Monsieur, avez-vous pu croire, vous à qui je n'ai pas adressé la parole depuis huit ans, que je vous choississais pour conduire cette négociation, et par l'entremise d'une femme d'un pareil ordre?'

"'Je vois bien que j'ai été cruellement trompé; l'envie que j'avais de plaire à sa Majesté m'a fasciné les yeux; je n'ai vu nulle supercherie, et j'en suis fâché.'

The rest of the account does not contain any details

<sup>1</sup> "Erreurs innombrables volontaires ou involontaires." *Michelet.*



affecting our inquiry; but we glean an important item of information from the foregoing extract.

*The Cardinal's bearing towards the Queen.* It will be seen that the Cardinal takes no notice whatever of the Queen, though she had addressed him personally, but replies to the King.<sup>1</sup>

This fact is indisputable.

M. Lafont d'Ausonne tells us that the Cardinal, on retiring, made a profound bow to the King; but, seeking and meeting the Queen's eye, "il osa la braver comme s'il eut été son égal."

Besenal, who says he had the details direct from the Queen, informs us that when Her Majesty addressed the Cardinal, "il affecta de ne point lui répondre, et continua à s'adresser au Roi."

Georgel, who of course derived his information from the Cardinal, shows that this contemptuous behaviour was intentional, since he acknowledges that His Eminence, in reply to Her Majesty's observation, simply "jeta sur la reine un regard peut-être trop peu respectueux."

And the Queen, referring in one of her letters to some prior audacity of the Cardinal, writes:—"il à montré dans le procès la même insolence. Il m'avait bravée devant le roy lui-même."

All accounts, therefore, agree that the Cardinal treated the observations of the Queen with silent

<sup>1</sup> Madame Campan has changed the whole point of this significant bearing on the part of the Cardinal by substituting "*votre Majesté*" for "*sa Majesté*".

contempt. This bearing is quite in harmony with the firm conviction he entertained that the Queen was simply acting a part. He still adhered to her direct implication, and actual receipt of the necklace. This belief had never really been shaken—that is evident.

On leaving the audience-chamber the Cardinal was publicly placed under arrest *Cardinal arrested.* and, in charge of an officer of the King's body-guard, had to run the gauntlet of an astonished and curious Court, and of the gaping crowd invariably present on these occasions. While making their way towards the Hôtel de Rohan, in the rue des Réservoirs, he managed to scribble a memorandum for the Abbé Georgel, which he found an opportunity of slipping into the hand of a confidential "heyduc" on reaching his hôtel.

Off speeds this trusty envoy for Paris, his horse dropping dead on reaching the courtyard of the "Palais Cardinal". Poor *Queen's notes destroyed.* brute, he had played his part in the drama, and not an unimportant one, for Georgel got the message in time to carry out its instructions, and that portion of the famous correspondence, comprising the Queen's letters, was destroyed.

What light they might have thrown upon our darkness!

The Cardinal was transferred that night to Paris, and on the following one conveyed to the Bastille. Hours, however, were allowed to elapse before any search was made amongst his papers! *Cardinal conveyed to the Bastille, Aug. 16-17.*



"Chose étonnante," observes Besenval.

Were they afraid of discovering too much? asks M. Louis Blanc.

Madame de La Motte and her husband were, as we have seen, down at Bar-sur-Aube, enjoying themselves after their own fashion, and showing no signs of fear or anxiety.

In the height of their festivities arrive tidings of the arrest of the Cardinal.

Now had Madame de Valois been really in the agony of fear as represented by her enemies, and had she possessed the spoils of the necklace, she could easily have made off with her plunder and reached a refuge of safety; the means and opportunity were at hand. Beugnot, who was present, importuned her to make her escape and offered the means, and she had abundance of time to have started for England, as he so strongly urged. *But she refused.*

*Arrest of  
Madame de  
Valois, 18th  
August.*

"The Countess was sound asleep when the officers of justice arrived" on the 18 Aug.<sup>1</sup>

It is worthy of note that these emissaries of justice, sent to arrest this accomplice in a presumed plunder of diamonds, make no search or inquiries after jewelry, but are specially instructed to take possession of every scrap of writing they can lay hands on!

*The hus-  
band allow-  
ed to escape.*

Strange to say, her husband was left at perfect liberty; "nous ne savons, en vérité, pourquoi," observes M. Campardon. He

<sup>1</sup> Vizetelly.

was not only not wanted, but his presence was evidently not desired, for the officers refused to allow him to accompany his wife, though he solicited permission to do so.<sup>1</sup>

Four or five days after Madame de La Motte had been lodged in the Bastille, down came the police to look after her husband, and very naturally found that their bird had taken wing for England, as was probably expected and desired.

Taking Beugnot's advice, he thought it more desirable, and safer, to place the channel between him and the proximate alternative of free quarters in a state prison of very dubious reputation.<sup>2</sup> *Takes refuge in England.*

The value of the decision to which the parliamentary tribunal appointed to judge the case, came; the justice of its verdict and of the punishments awarded; depend upon whether the trial was a genuine one. Was it undertaken with a view of eliciting the truth? Was it conducted with fairness and impartiality? *The Trial a farce.*

M. Campardon has published a very elaborate defence of Marie Antoinette "d'après le procédure devant le parlement de Paris",—a work which has been pronounced irrefutable, and satisfactorily exonerating the Queen from any complicity in the affair.

<sup>1</sup> "Ce détail important, rapporté dans la "Mémoire justificatif" de la Dame de La Motte, n'est démenti par aucune des pièces de la procédure."  
*Louis Combes.*

<sup>2</sup> Besenval, Beugnot.



By taking the parliamentary proceedings, *as they have come down to us*, for a base, it is very easy to prove the de La Mottes guilty, the Cardinal a dupe, and the Queen a perfect stranger to the intrigue; but cui bono? That was the conclusion arrived at—with intent—in 1786. Why go over the same ground again?

To prove his argument by the records of the judicial proceedings to which the affair gave rise is, from our point of view, to beg the whole question. We must first satisfy ourselves that M. Campardon's foundation is sound; decide in short, whether we are justified in placing confidence in the tribunal of justice, before accepting its authority as anywise conclusive.

*Michelet's* Michelet has epitomised the whole proceedings graphically:  
*strictures.*

“Ce grand procès n’a été que jugé;—éclairci?—examiné? Non.”

“Le procès fut un jeu.”

It is impossible to question the justice of this stricture.

Corruption and intimidation appear to have been the levers by which the legal machine was worked. Few were exempt, from witnesses even to the judges. This is evident from the admissions of orthodox writers.

*Corruption* “During the continuance of the process”  
*of the judges.* —writes Mr. Vizetelly—“every effort was

*Vizetelly* made by the Grand Almoner's friends to  
*quoting* increase the number of his adherents among  
*Campan.* the councillors who had to judge the case.

Mesdames de Marsan, de Brionne and the Prince

de Soubise visited all the members of the Grand Chamber in turn and solicited them in the Cardinal's behalf. We know that the prime minister, the Count de Vergennes, was a secret partisan of the Grand Almoner, and we know, moreover, that M. de Laurencel, the 'Procureur-Général's' substitute, drew up a list of names of members of the Great Chamber, wherein he set forth, against each, the means that had been employed to gain that particular councillor's vote.

"From this document it would seem that ladies of the highest position did not scruple to accept large bribes to exercise their powers of seduction in the Cardinal's behalf, and it was by these means, we are told, that some of the most venerable among the judges had been corrupted."

M. Campardon admits that it was specially from amongst those who were to officiate as his judges, that the Cardinal found his warmest adherents and partisans: "le parlement fut gagné presque en entier."

One of the most recent apologists of Marie Antoinette, Professor Yonge, writes that this parliament was "wholly destitute of every quality which ought to belong to a judicial bench,—of a regard for truth and justice, and even of a knowledge of the law."

"Corruption, without shame or disguise, was allowed to sway the highest judicial tribunal in the country."



Yet this was the tribunal upon whose fiat M. Cam-pardon based his defence of the Queen and Cardinal!

The wholesale corruption of the judges, however, was not the only auxiliary called into action on behalf of His Eminence. The "Rapporteur" and "Greffier" were gained over to such an extent that they would alter the sense of the depositions, or adjourn the proceedings if they feared the Cardinal was likely to say anything self-incriminating, or injurious to his interests.<sup>1</sup>

*Manœuvres  
of Georgel.*

The Abbé Georgel was the presiding genius and very soul of the defence. During the "confrontations", when the accused are always deprived of the assistance of Counsel and not even permitted to hold communication with them, the Cardinal's advocate and friends experienced considerable "inquiétude" lest he should make any damaging avowals. The position was felt to be "très-alarmante". But in this awkward dilemma the "vulpine" Abbé, as Carlyle styles him, came to the front and proved quite equal to the occasion.

He managed very cleverly to evade the law by carrying on a secret correspondence with his noble client under a disguised form, intelligible to the Cardinal alone, who, by means of this "subterfuge innocent", was enabled to let the Abbé know all that took place at the "confrontations" without anyone suspecting it. The Abbé also gave the Cardinal the

<sup>1</sup> Anecdotes du règne de Louis XVI.

results of the conference of his council, and thus directed his line of conduct, and was even in a position to suggest his responses.

To crown the whole, M. Deprèsménil, "conseiller de parlement", found means of forwarding to the Abbé certain private information, interesting particulars etc. the knowledge of which proved of the utmost service in conducting the defence of the Cardinal.

Not a doubt of it!—and thus these "days of agony" passed happily by!!

All this certainly shews very clever manipulation on the part of the Abbé, and exhibits the zeal of the Cardinal's relations and friends in a strong light; but it exposes, at the same time, the inherent weakness of a cause which it was found necessary to uphold by wholesale corruption, and expedients of so bare-faced a character.

The Queen's party, on the other side, was equally active. The Baron de Breteuil, whose hatred of the Cardinal knew no bounds, thought that in this scandalous affair he had found the opportunity of satisfying his revenge by compassing the ruin of his rival. Ignoring every principle of justice, he sent an emissary to Madame de Valois with offers of indemnity and support if she would furnish sufficient proof to inculcate his old enemy. He likewise made certain overtures to St. James, and to the jewellers, offering the latter payment in full

*The Queen's party.*

*De Breteuil makes overtures to Madame de Valois; also to St. James and the jewellers.*



for their necklace, under conditions of a similarly corrupt character.

It is acknowledged that there are strong reasons for believing that the Home Secretary, and other enemies of the Cardinal, insinuated to Madame de Valois, through various channels, that if she would only produce some good evidence against the Grand Almoner no other victim would be required.<sup>1</sup>

*Georgel on this subject.* And what does Georgel say?

“Quant à ce que malignité a cherché à insinuer que la Souveraine, pour entraîner la perte du Cardinal, fit promettre l'impunité à Madame de La Motte, c'est un blasphème qui n'aurait jamais souillé ma plume, si cette horrible croyance n'avait eu des partisans.”

But this “horrible croyance” had very numerous disciples, and from the tone of the Abbé's observation it is clear that he regarded the “blasphemy” as founded on fact.

M. de Breteuil it also appears showed a most curious solicitude about the selection of the counsel for Madame de La Motte.

Through M. de Crosne, lieutenant of police, he tried to persuade Count Beugnot to undertake the defence; not, we can readily understand, from any promptings of interest on her behalf, but because he had been made aware that Beugnot regarded the necklace portion

<sup>1</sup> Vizetelly.

of the intrigue as an incident of comparatively trifling importance, while he looked upon the midnight rendezvous and correspondence as a capital offence for which the Cardinal should be arraigned under a charge of high treason.

This was precisely what the Queen demanded. Blinded by passion, Marie Antoinette seems to have been so intent upon revenge as to have quite overlooked the requirements of justice, and is even said to have demanded of the King the life of the Cardinal. The King, moreover, is believed to have promised that he should not escape the scaffold.<sup>1</sup>

There can be no doubt regarding these advances, with offers of indemnity, made to Madame de Valois, with the double object of shielding the Queen and sacrificing the Cardinal; and her bearing during the trial, and likewise after condemnation, indicates her confidence of the highest protection being enlisted on her side, if she only followed the line of defence traced out for her.<sup>2</sup>

But this became more and more difficult as the trial proceeded, and involved her in inextricable contradictions. She had to modify her defence according to the evidence produced. Forced to substitute some

<sup>1</sup> Vizetelly.

M. Renée writes:—"Elle le haïssait en femme offensée, et l'orgueil blessé, chez elle, ne pardonnait pas."

<sup>2</sup> "Madame de La Motte fut superbe d'assurance et de sang froid, assurance extraordinaire qui témoignait d'une ferme conviction qu'on ne pouvait, ou qu'on n'oserait la frapper."

*Combes.*



absurd fable for the reality and driven at times into a corner, she would give expression to exclamations and menaces which struck the tribunal with terror.<sup>1</sup>

*The Cardinal and Valois lie to the best of their abilities.* The Cardinal's defence was a lie throughout, which, as M. Campardon explains, was "une nécessité de position". That was his only chance, the sole requisite being "une ferme et solide impudence pour bien mentir"; for who would dare to pit the "yes" of Madame de Valois against the "no" of a prince of the Church?<sup>2</sup>

And Madame de La Motte was equally driven to lies; nor, indeed, does she hesitate to acknowledge the fact. In reply to an observation from the Cardinal, that she had made some statement which she well knew to be false, she significantly remarks:—"Comme tout le reste, Monsieur; depuis que ces Messieurs nous interrogent, vous savez que ni vous ni moi ne leur avons dit un seul mot de vérité".

Three years later, in 1789, the Cardinal confessed that both of them, during the trial, had been bent upon hiding the real facts.<sup>3</sup>

"Madame de La Motte"—writes M. Louis Blanc,—  
"fut conduite à mentir aux dépens du Cardinal, qui, de

<sup>1</sup> "Elle laissa échapper des cris qui glacèrent d'effroi le tribunal:—Qu'on y prenne garde! si l'on me pousse à bout, je parlerai."

*L. Blanc.*

"Je ne périrai qu'en révélant des mystères d'iniquité qui feront connaître de grands personnages encore cachés derrière le rideau."

*Georgel.*

<sup>2</sup> Michelet.

<sup>3</sup> Mountjoye.

son côté, se sentait perdu s'il ne mentait aux dépens de Madame de La Motte.

"Là est la clef du procès."

It is evident, therefore, that we must seek the truth outside the trial, from among those items of information which were not permitted to appear, or from those which slipped out accidentally, and were contested—but never refuted.

Any damnatory evidence which could not be admitted had to be got rid of somehow; so a process of eliminating, or pooh-poohing inconvenient testimony was adopted whenever the occasion demanded.

*Evidence as to Cardinal's personal relations with the Queen.*

The depositions of the banker St. James and of the jeweller Bassenge are to the point. Their evidence was highly incriminating. The contested relations between the Queen and Cardinal were openly testified to.

The banker deposed:

*Deposition of St. James.*

That the Cardinal told him he had seen in the Queen's hands the 700,000 frs. destined by her for the first instalment due in August; that the Queen had, at the time, offered to hand over this money to the Cardinal for transmission to the jewellers; that he had not taken advantage of the offer, a circumstance he had since regretted.

This deposition is sufficiently circumstantial, but M. Target disposes of it in a very summary fashion.

He observes, in the first place, that, if St. James



believed he had heard the Cardinal make use of such strange words, he ought to have felt certain that he must have misunderstood him, and should never have ventured to repeat the same.

He then insists that the Cardinal did not tell him he had seen the 700,000 frs. in the hands of the Queen, but that he had seen a note from her in which it was said she had the 700,000 for the purpose in question.

The deposition was in respect to a sum of money in the Queen's hands; and the explanation is that there was neither Queen nor money seen, but merely a note in the hands of Madame de La Motte!

M. Campardon supports this argument; "it must, of course, have been an error of memory, or else St. James did not correctly catch the words of the Cardinal, who was not impudent enough to tell such a lie."

Unfortunately for these ingeniously plausible suggestions, the evidence of St. James on the point does not stand alone.

*Deposition of Bassenge.* It oozed out, during the "confrontations", that the Cardinal had made a most remarkable affirmation as to his personal relations with the Queen in reply to a question put to him by Bassenge, who, alarmed about his money, had asked him whether he placed implicit confidence in his "intermédiaire"—meaning Madame de Valois.

The reply might easily have been the simple assurance as required; but how did the Cardinal meet the enquiry?

There was no question of any "intermédiaire" at all. He replies: "Je vous affirme que j'ai traité directement, et je vous l'assure en levant le bras en signe d'affirmation; allez-vous-en rassurer votre associé."

The Cardinal further impressed upon Bassenge the necessity of his not divulging the secret he had thus confided to his keeping, and threatened, should he do so, that he, the Cardinal, would most certainly deny the fact.

Could any evidence be stronger or more to the point? The expressions are clear and impressive; the affirmation solemn, even imposing. No pretext here for suggesting any mistake or error of memory.

The revelation is crushing, and the awkward testimony cannot be gainsaid; so M. Campardon, driven to his wits' end for some explanation, can only assume that the Cardinal lied—with intent.

His Eminence, therefore, must evidently in this case have found the necessary impudence M. Campardon so niggardly denied him on the previous occasion!

It thus appears that, in addition to the particulars previously confided to Boëhmer, of his private understanding and interviews with the Queen, evidence was given during the trial that the Cardinal had likewise revealed to St. James and Bassenge, in strictest confidence, the personal communications he had held with Marie Antoinette relative to the purchase of the necklace.

*This evidence remains unrefuted*, however much it may be conveniently extenuated or pooh-poohed.



Well might Madame de Valois exclaim:

“Si l'on n'eut pas pris à tâche d'étouffer la vérité sur les lèvres même où elle cherchait à s'ouvrir un passage, eut-on passé aussi légèrement qu'on l'a fait sur des circonstances aussi essentielles?”

“A quoi servirent donc les dépositions?”

*Subornation of witnesses.* Madame de La Motte further complains of the shameful manner in which witnesses were tampered with,—“subornation criante.”

*The jewellers.* For instance, the promise of payment in full for their necklace was offered the jewellers under certain conditions; they have also acknowledged—as we have seen—that they were obliged, by the minister de Breteuil, to keep back certain facts, when giving evidence, which might appear to involve the Queen.<sup>1</sup>

Let us glance at some of the other leading witnesses:—the Father Loth, the Baron de Planta, Cagliostro, Villette and d'Oliva.

*Father Loth.* The Father Loth was an unmitigated knave. He had been a protégé of Madame de La Motte, fattening on the prosperity of his benefactress without ever exhibiting any scrupulousness as to the sources of her opulence. His priestly conscience reposed in the delicious calm of blissful enjoyment, so long as fortune smiled on his lady patroness. No sooner, however, had the Bastille enclosed Madame Jeanne, than this

<sup>1</sup> Georgel. “Mémoire pour servir, etc.”

elastic conscience woke, suddenly, to a most harassing perception of the manifest nefariousness of her past life—the life by which he had benefited, and so gladly shared.

At first he kept studiously out of sight, through fear of being charged as an accessory, so notorious had been his relations with the accused; but when thoroughly reassured as to his personal safety, and taught to see in which direction his future interests lay, he was ready enough to feather his nest.

He then assumed an importance he never, in reality, had any title to claim. He became quite communicative, and assured Georgel that Madame de Valois had admitted him into her entire confidence. Among other presumed revelations, he told him he had "*surprised*" her, the eve of her "*evasion*", burning papers, which she "*confessed*" were the Cardinal's letters to the Queen.

As if the wily Jeanne, "surprised" in destroying papers, would have "confessed" what those papers were, and to a man she suspected rather than trusted!

For, as a matter of fact, this reverend father was never taken into her confidence as he falsely pretended. The Count Beugnot shows that he was really much mistrusted, never admitted to any of the plans of the principal actors, and reduced to the humiliating alternative of listening behind doors to his infinite disgust.



But, in consideration of his services to the cause of the Cardinal, he received an appointment to the order of Malta, with Quarters in the Temple.<sup>1</sup>

The Abbé Georgel's admissions regarding this witness furnish proof how carefully he had been "coached", and the advantages made clear, of studying "expediency" in giving evidence. On the subject of the correspondence, we are told, he was studiously reticent,—why? Because, explains Georgel, the topic was of a nature that might prove more injurious than advantageous to the cause of His Eminence, and it was from this point of view that the Father Loth thought it "expedient" to frame his deposition!

We take our sketch of the antecedents of the Baron de Planta—"a black sheep of the choicest breed" as Mr. Vizetelly styles him—from the Abbé Georgel.

*Baron de* This adventurer had played at Vienna  
*Planta.* the rôle of an "observateur utile" to his Eminence, his services being recognised by "gratifications". Turning this delicately expressed French into plain English, we may fairly infer that his ordinary functions embraced those of a confidential spy. The Cardinal had picked him up in Vienna, "vegetating sadly," having previously held a commission, as Captain, in the Swiss regiment which he had been compelled to quit; then a Majority in the Prussian service, from which he had been sent about his busi-

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondance secrète inédite etc." par Lescure; also "Mémoires inédite du Comte de La Motte-Valois," par Louis Lacour.

ness. Needy, unprincipled, and rendered supple by repeated misfortunes, he was devoted body and soul to the Cardinal.

It is not difficult to gauge the judicial value of this witness; his evidence would, manifestly, bear a direct proportion to the profit he expected to realise thereby.<sup>1</sup>

Charlatan and professor of fraud, Cagliostro was the Cardinal's mentor in every step of the intrigue. Present or absent, he was—as Madame de Valois asserts—"the star that influenced all the Cardinal's actions." Georgel admits he was "son oracle, son guide et sa boussole," and Campardon that he "undoubtedly" knew all the details of the "negociation" relative to the necklace.

As one of the accused, his object was, of course, to save himself at the expense of Madame de La Motte; and this he succeeded in doing.

Cagliostro, we are told, "stripped the Countess'" highly inventive narrative of its marvellous character, and exposed her falsehoods, etc.<sup>2</sup>

Quite possible; Madame de Valois never pretended she was speaking the truth; but still we are quite unable to accept this impostor's word as of sufficient weight, or sufficiently trustworthy, to controvert that of anyone else. His is scarcely that testimony to be

<sup>1</sup> The Baron accidentally let out, during the confrontations, about Madame de Valois' visits to the Queen, and about several presents of money she received from H. M.; but this was not entered on the proceedings. *Mem. Justif.*

<sup>2</sup> Vizetelly.



evoked in condemnation of the "marvellous", the "inventive", or the "false".

The would-be crushing, the all-sensational qualification with which he saluted Madame de Valois, that "mentiris impudentissime", bears a rather self-reflective signification when issuing from the lips of one whose peculiar vocation it was to lie, whose whole career had been one magnificent imposture.

And, but a short time back, the lady thus cynically apostrophised, had been—"sa biche, sa gazelle, son cygne et sa colombe!"

She had been the presiding spirit of those jovial reunions at Cagliostro's mansion. These evenings, we read, were charming. The Cardinal used to sup there daily, and the society was not ever numerous, but picked. The fascinating Seraphina, the young secretary Carbonnière and his sister, also the Baron de Planta, these composed, ordinarily, the "petite société que Madame de La Motte égayait par son humeur enjouée." The Cardinal stood treat, and supplied the Imperial Tokay from his own cellars.<sup>1</sup>

*Villette.* We have already had occasion, when treating of the Bosquet scene and, subsequently, when the necklace vanished, to introduce Rétaux de Villette to our readers. Every circumstance in connection with the testimony of this witness tends strongly to indicate subornation.

When first captured and in charge of Police-Inspector

<sup>1</sup> Georgel.

Quidor, he would, when under the inspiration of wine, chat freely enough concerning his "liaison" with Madame Jeanne, and let fall certain scraps of information touching the "belle demoiselle du Palais Royal," and the meeting in the Park; but the stimulus of wine failed to elicit any avowal touching the correspondence, or necklace, or the false signature.

His first statement, on being immured in the Bastille, harmonised with these confidences to the Inspector, and with the story told by Madame de Valois in her Mémoires, except, indeed, that he tried to shuffle out of the question of the signature.

A month later he turns completely round, and *volunteers* evidence fully supporting the views of the Cardinal; though he persisted to the last in denying any participation in the scene when the necklace passed out of the keeping of the Cardinal. *On that point he never wavered.*

It is manifest that a month's incarceration had schooled him to see things in their proper light, and taught him the right direction in which his interests lay. If direct proof of this is sought, it is forthcoming; for, in order to support the Cardinal's *nécessité de position*, he even *testified to an admitted falsehood*; that the Queen's notes were always addressed to Madame de La Motte, never to the Cardinal.

When confronted with Madame de La Motte he very significantly remarks,—“Madame, you do not evidently understand your own interests.”



Villette, anyhow, understood his own, and to some purpose. He stands before justice, on his own confession, the accomplice and prime instrument in the abstraction of the necklace,—a forger and a swindler.

And his punishment? Banishment!

The “procureur-général” submitted that he should be condemned to the galleys for life, flogged and branded.

But the Cardinal's party was too powerful, and “although Villette had so justly merited the galleys, he was only condemned to banishment.”<sup>1</sup>

This admission is sufficiently damnatory.

*D'Oliva.* Mademoiselle d'Oliva seems to have been the one honest witness among the lot.

“What she knew she told with frankness and with an air of perfect truth.”<sup>2</sup>

Her simplicity was found to be an embarrassing element under the circumstances, and it became therefore necessary to cover portions of her depositions with a discreet veil.<sup>3</sup>

This fact, from an orthodox pen, gives considerable weight to Madame de Valois' assertion that d'Oliva positively testified to the actual presence of the Queen in the gardens, but that this evidence was suppressed.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Campardon.

<sup>2</sup> Vizetelly.

<sup>3</sup> “La dernière pièce du fameux Collier.”

<sup>4</sup> “Je suis bien sure que j'ai vu et entendu la Reine, et qu'elle m'a parlé.” Mademoiselle Dorvat, who attended the Queen to the “bosquet”, was “reléguée dans le fond d'un province.” *Mem. Justif.*

In defence of his client, M. Target was driven to the expedient of attributing to the Cardinal an amount of credulity more than infantine. He pleads imbecility as, in certain cases, one pleads lunacy, and even to the present day it is pretended that all the difficulties are met, and mysteries solved by this fiction. The argument of an advocate has been transformed into an historical dogma.<sup>1</sup>

The trial was made subservient to private and party passions. Whichever way one turns it is in vain to seek for impartiality or any desire for justice. Even the Queen was not above coming to Paris and personally soliciting; holding private "conciliabules" with the "rapporteurs, le premier président, le procureur-général et M. d'Amecourt."<sup>2</sup>

*The Queen  
exerts a  
personal in-  
fluence.*

Between the Queen's party on one side, and that of the Cardinal on the other, Madame de Valois stood no chance of obtaining any justice. She might be graphically described as between the two stools!

*The Trial a  
farce.*

The whole affair was preconcerted. The essential was to amuse the public and play out the farce.

<sup>1</sup> Louis Combes.

The defence of the Cardinal, in short, consisted in trying to establish the hypothesis that he was a supreme idiot, while the whole proceedings exhibit the skill shown by this idiot in order to make-believe in his idiocy.

The following are some of the epithets bestowed upon His Eminence.

"Une dupe des plus niaises."

"Un franc imbécile."

"Crédulité inconcevable, phénoménale, surnaturelle."

"La plus sotte des dupes."

"Insatiable gull."

<sup>2</sup> Georgel, Soulavie.



"Chacun sait qu'on procéda, en effet, judiciairement dans cette affaire que la Reine n'avait jamais vu la femme La Motte, et qu'au moyen des interrogats et des réponses préparés à l'avance, tout se termina par sacrifier le plus faible." <sup>1</sup>

*Negotiations  
for the Count  
to appear.*

Madame de La Motte tried to prolong the proceedings, urging that application might be made to the King for permission to send for her husband to give evidence.

This move, had it been successful, would undoubtedly have proved highly important and inconvenient, and this was what the de Rohans dreaded.

*M. de Ver-  
genne's  
passivity in  
this respect.*

The Count was a witness "que le Cardinal redoutait," so he had been allowed to remain in England, and M. de Vergennes, a friend of the de Rohans, exhibited, in his case, a masterly inactivity, merely going through the form of demanding of the English Government the extradition of the Count,—forms, but no action. Villette and d'Oliva, however, whom the Cardinal wanted, were unearthed, "through the good offices of the Count de Vergennes";—the former run down at Geneva, the latter at Brussels. <sup>2</sup>

*His action  
in the Car-  
dinal's in-  
terests.*

*Verdict  
precipitated.*

At the eleventh hour the Queen's party, through the instrumentality of M. d'Adhemar, the French Ambassador in London, entered into

<sup>1</sup> "Maximes et pensées de Louis XVI. et d'Antoinette." *Lerouge*, 1802.

<sup>2</sup> Vizetelly.

negotiations with the object of persuading the Count de La Motte to come over and furnish the evidence necessary to convict the Cardinal of high treason, and 10,000 louis were, at the Queen's instance, placed at the disposal of the Ambassador for this purpose.<sup>1</sup>

When, however, the arrangements were complete, and the Count was preparing to start for Paris, the Cardinal's party, with the help of de Vergennes, succeeded in precipitating the verdict.<sup>2</sup>

Up to the very last moment we see the members of the houses of Rohan and Lorraine still trying to influence the decision of the judges. Dressed in the deepest mourning they lined the approaches to the Palais, obtruding an imposing aspect of silently-pleading grief.

Sentence was pronounced on the 31 May, *Sentence 31 May, 1786.*

The Cardinal was, of course, acquitted, the consciences of the judges being "déjà surprises par les amitiés et les obsessions de famille en faveur du Cardinal!"<sup>3</sup>

For Madame de La Motte the Court reserved the weight of its punishment,—a cruel punishment worse than death!

"Condemns Jeanne de Valois de Saint-Remy de Luz, wife of Marc Antoine Nicholas de La Motte, to be flogged and beaten with rods, having a halter round her neck, and naked; and further to be branded with

<sup>1</sup> "Compte rendu de ce qui s'est passé au parlement relativement à l'affaire de M. le Cardinal de Rohan." *Paris, 1786.*

<sup>2</sup> Vizetelly, Lacour, La Motte.

<sup>3</sup> F. de Conches.



a hot iron, on both shoulders, with the letter V., by the public executioner; this done, to be led and conducted to the prison of "La Salpêtrière, and there detained and confined for life."

All the old titles of her royal descent fully enumerated;—a Saint Remy de Valois to be stripped naked, then publicly whipped and branded!

Madame de Valois was kept in ignorance of her fate for three weeks.

"La cour hésitait à exécuter l'arrêt... il fut question de commuer la peine."<sup>1</sup>

Well may they have hesitated! Whatever her misdemeanours, her share of the punishments awarded was out of all proportion,—was iniquitous.

The Queen, we are told, wanted the sentence not to be carried into effect, and tried to save the prisoner, but could not venture publicly to interfere.<sup>2</sup> This is highly probable; anyhow, the unfortunate woman was abandoned to her fate, and the sentence was duly carried out, in all its horrors, on the 21st June. See Appendix No. 7.

But she managed to escape from "La Salpêtrière" with the connivance of the authorities, who thus sought to re-establish the balance of justice!<sup>3</sup>

*The official documents suppressed.* M. de Breteuil very prudently determined that no records of this shameful trial should ever turn up at any future period. The

<sup>1</sup> Renée, Droz.

<sup>2</sup> Besenval, Michelet.

<sup>3</sup> Campan.

official documents relative thereto were suppressed; the order demanding their delivery is dated "St. Cloud, 5 Septembre, 1786" and is countersigned by de Breteuil. The chief portions of the interrogations, both at the Bastille and before M. de Crosne, as well as the notes addressed by him to the Baron de Breteuil, have all disappeared; nothing was left except "quelques pièces insignifiantes."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the many who, when the Bastille fell, had looked forward to some revelations on the subject were doomed to disappointment. M. Charpentier's "Bastille Dévoilée" informs us à propos:—

"Nous n'avons pour juger Madame de La Motte d'autre pièces que celles que tout le monde connaît, grace à l'heureuse prévoyance de M. de Breteuil, qui a fait enlever toutes les lumières qu'aurait sûrement procurés la prise de la Bastille."

Yet notwithstanding all these precautions Soulavie says:—"Malgré le jugement qui indiquait les innocents et les coupables, cette sale procédure a laissé la mémoire de la reine couverte de nuages dans l'esprit de beaucoup de monde en France et en Europe. Rien n'a pu anéantir le soupçon que la reine fût d'intelligence avec la dame de Lamothe pour se procurer le collier. Le Cardinal de Rohan n'a cessé de dire qu'aucun des accusés n'avait dit vrai dans cette procédure: il ajoutait que lui seul avait dit la vérité, sans la dire toute."

<sup>1</sup> "Mémoires tirés des archives de la police à Paris, par Peuchet—archiviste de la police."

Paris, 1838.



## PART IV.

### THE QUEEN.

"Là est la clef du procès. Il demeura couvert d'une obscurité impénétrable, parceque, pour la dissiper, il aurait fallu prononcer un nom que ne pouvaient entendre prononcer les juges." *L. Blanc.*

"La raillerie des faux dieux est le premier devoir de l'historien, son indispensable instrument pour rétablir la vérité." *Michélet.*

*What became of the necklace.* WHAT became of the necklace? Certain fractions of this splendid jewel have been traced, but it still remains a subject of mere conjecture what became of the principal portion.

We know the necklace was handed over, in its integrity, to the Cardinal; here we lose sight of it. The necklace disappears and henceforth we only come across fragments, comparatively small

Madame de La Motte insists that the Queen had it.

The partisans of the orthodox version maintain that Madame de La Motte made off with the coveted prize which never, they assert, really passed out of her possession on the 1st February.

This is of course possible. Madame de Valois may have been quite capable of committing the fraud, but

it has certainly never been brought home to her; neither is the suggestion quite reconcilable with facts, or probabilities.<sup>1</sup>

If it was really believed Madame de La Motte had appropriated the necklace, why were not inquiries instituted forthwith? Why was no search made for the jewels by the officers of justice sent to arrest her?

The Cardinal had made his declaration; a diamond robbery had been committed; a person is taken up on suspicion of being implicated;—yet the search is limited to papers! Minute instructions are given to lay hands upon every scrap of paper, but not a word do we hear about diamonds.

The Count, her husband, is not even apprehended, but gets the broadest of hints to make off with the spoil.

Well might M. Campardon have felt rather at a loss for an explanation on this head, and been forced to confess his inability to offer any!

Madame de La Motte acknowledges having received, in the form of a gift from the Queen, a very valuable portion of the diamonds. These stones she showed to the Cardinal, who advised her to dispose of them privately, and not in Paris for fear they might be recognised; consequently in April 1785, the Count crossed to London and sold most of them to the jewellers, Gray of Bond Street. We have

*The La  
Mottes' ver-  
sion.*

*The Count  
in London  
Apr. 1785.*

<sup>1</sup> The attempt to implicate Villette as personating the Queen's messenger, signally failed as we have seen.



a detailed account of this transaction in the "Mémoires Justificatifs," according to which the Queen retained 256 of the finest and some 98 other stones.<sup>1</sup>

*Carbon-  
nière in  
London Nov.  
1785*

When the trial was impending, the Cardinal despatched his confidential Secretary, Carbonnière, to London to see what evidence could be picked up that might tell against the de La Mottes. The plan of action here suggested was quite simple. He would only have to prove the sale of the diamonds to Gray in order to throw all suspicion upon Madame de La Motte. If she had sold some, why not all? Such, he might safely reckon would be the general verdict.

But this, evidently, did not at all meet the views of the Queen's party, consisting of the Abbé de Vermond, the Minister de Breteuil, the "procureur-général" de Fleury, the "premier-président" d'Aligre etc.

No sooner had the Baron de Breteuil, "l'homme de la Reine," learnt the intentions of the Cardinal than he set the police in motion to arrest Carbonnière.<sup>2</sup>

Warned, however, in time, he had changed his line

<sup>1</sup> In a letter addressed to M. de Montmorin, the Minister, dated 22nd September, 1790, and found among the private papers of the King taken on the 10th August, the Count writes:—"Madame de La Motte n'a reçu des fragments du collier que les pièces marquantes, et dont la trace pouvait être suivie. Mon épouse m'a donné ces pièces, que j'ai vendues, en m'assurant que c'était un présent de la Reine."

<sup>2</sup> On the hypothesis that the Queen *had* bestowed a portion of the jewels upon Madame de Valois, she would naturally object to their private disposal being brought home to her husband.

of route, and succeeded in reaching London in spite of many difficulties and obstacles.<sup>1</sup>

Through his agency the Cardinal managed to obtain from the jewellers a statement *Gray's statement.* which exhibits considerable variations from the Count's version, and credits him with the sale of a larger portion of the necklace.

This document, however, was not drawn up till the month of November, and the sale had been effected in April; yet it professes to reassign to each unmounted stone, from memory, its proper position in a necklace the jeweller had never seen; solely on the authority of an engraving shown him seven months after the transaction had occurred.<sup>2</sup>

When this document was produced in evidence it was looked upon as so "very suspicious" in character that the "procureur-général" refused to admit it. The de Rohans, however, appealed to the "garde des sceaux", Miromesnil, and carried their point. The Magistrates were "forced" to accept and employ it.<sup>3</sup>

Thus to force the hands of justice, compel it to accept a document "infiniment suspecte", which, if accepted, settled the whole affair, was—as Michelet points out—"indigne et énorme."

It is impossible, under such circumstances, to regard

<sup>1</sup> Droz.

<sup>2</sup> Since the La Mottes never denied the possession and sale of these diamonds, this evidence was really of small importance, except on the trial, where it was confessedly misused.

<sup>3</sup> Georgel.



this evidence as anywise satisfactory, still less admit it to be of sufficient weight to controvert the statements of the de La Mottes.

Those writers who are bent upon proving Madame de La Motte guilty have, of course, eagerly accepted Gray's document. They contrive to make out, with this help, that she and her husband realised in Paris and London some £20,000. However, even this estimate, based upon a "highly suspicious" document, represents but a comparatively small part of the estimated value of the necklace.

A large number of the diamonds originally composing this unique jewel, stones at once recognisable by their very exceptional quality, have never been since traced. This fact would rather indicate that the necklace had fallen into the keeping of no needy adventuress, but of someone who could afford to retain, or, if necessary, sacrifice it.

Anyhow, the question as to what became of these missing jewels remains unanswered, unless we admit the Queen's implication as advanced by Madame de Valois.

That is the point at issue—a question that could not be raised in 1786.

The question naturally arises:—Would the Queen's implication be a more incredible solution than the highly incredible one that has been offered for our acceptance?

Much would, of course, depend upon the Queen's idiosyncrasies.

Had Marie Antoinette in character and conduct, realised that legendary Queen with whom we are all so familiar,—“*princesse la plus décente, la plus circonspécte, la plus irréprochable, qui jamais ait été vue sur le trône,*”<sup>1</sup> the immaculate portrait, in short, portrayed by “the faithful and devoted,”—any such hypothesis as her possible implication in so scandalous an intrigue might be dismissed as too gross an incongruity to be canvassed; but, as is now generally admitted, these courtly historiographers gave us fiction in lieu of the reality. They raised up an ideal impersonality, and an enthusiastic flock prostrated itself before the idol.<sup>2</sup>

One of our later authorities, M. de Lescure, a most zealous champion of the Queen, deplores these “exaggerations of the faithful”, who, in opposition to the dissolute and criminal Marie Antoinette portrayed by the revolutionists, raised up an abnormal individuality, “not only exempt from crime, but faultless; not only faultless, but without blemish.”<sup>3</sup> He laments these “servile exaggerations, the stupid zeal of those who have constituted themselves champions of a memory that has no need of such defence.”

*La vraie  
Marie Antoi-  
nette de M.  
de Lescure.*

Unfortunately the “Vraie Marie Antoinette” of M.

<sup>1</sup> Lafont d'Aussonne.

<sup>2</sup> “Idole que la sensiblerie des salons avait forgée.” Arneth and Geffroy. Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> “Femme aux grâces angéliques, épouse aux sraphiques vertus etc.”



de Lescure is equally painted with all the brilliant colouring of enthusiastic admiration, and is almost as poetical and overcharged as the rhapsodies he starts by condemning.

*MM. de  
Goncourt on  
the same  
subject.*

The MM. de Goncourt, whose history of Marie Antoinette is particularly recommended by M. de Lescure as an "authentic study," have also exhibited for admiration the picture of a fair young Archduchess, whose daily instruction a loving mother anxiously superintends and controls, even in the minutest details; guiding her tasks; giving personal supervision to her writing lessons; complimenting her on her progress etc.; never choosing to trust the talents of her daughter to the obsequiousness or indulgence of courtly governesses.<sup>1</sup>

*Madame  
Campan in  
contradiction.*

So much for fiction; let us now turn our attention to a few facts.

We are indebted to Madame Campan for a glimpse of the truth. She admits us behind the scenes at the rehearsal of an amusing farce.

The cares of the Cabinet, she says, left the Empress but little time for either nursery or schoolroom.

<sup>1</sup> This so-called biography more resembles a historical romance. Written in a strain both laudatory and apologetic, every favourable trait that idolatry has handed down is here recorded and embellished, while any less favourable characteristic is transfigured by their eloquent and euphemistic pen. We read of her: "vivacités", "jolies audaces", "bonheurs indiscrets de la parole", and "gracieuses ignorances"; her "gaité folle, légère, pétulante"; "la mobilité, la naïveté, l'étourderie, l'espièglerie, le tapage de ses mille grâces," etc. Similar qualifying euphemisms are current throughout.

Although daily reports were made touching the health of the children, she would, at times, pass eight or ten days without even seeing them. The highly attractive pictures of maternal tenderness and devotion, exhibited before distinguished guests invited to the imperial circle, were just so many "tableaux vivants" got up by the Empress for their express edification, with the design of gaining credit for a personal supervision that had no reality.<sup>1</sup>

The "grandes maîtresses" having no control or supervision to fear, sought only to render themselves agreeable by culpable indulgence, and the education of the young Archduchess was, in consequence, sadly neglected.

"Belles lettres" and history, even that of her own country, were a "terra incognita." She knew nothing of Latin, though we read that the young Archduchesses were drilled to listen with apparent attention and intelligence to Latin harangues and make responses in the same language. Drawings were exhibited as her handiwork, which she confessed she had scarcely touched. She could not write French at all correctly, and as regards music she was quite ignorant of its first elements.

<sup>1</sup> It would appear that sufficient care was not always taken to secure teachers whose characters would bear investigation. The French Ambassador was instructed to remonstrate on the selection of two of the masters appointed, and their services had to be dispensed with. One was a notorious "mauvais sujet."



The Dauphine herself acknowledged the "charlatanerie" of her education.<sup>1</sup>

*The veritable Marie Antoinette.* Fortunately we are no longer at the mercy of "historiens réparateurs et expiatoires." In the "Vienna Correspondence" published by MM. d'Arneth and Geffroy are to be found most valuable "data" to guide the historian.

We are here enabled to follow the innermost life of the Dauphine and young Queen in detail, consequently are in a position to form our own opinion regarding her character and accomplishments. The material is

<sup>1</sup> And yet Messrs. Weber and Mountjoie have described her on arriving in France, as mistress of every accomplishment,—proficient in French, English, Latin, Italian, drawing, music and dancing, geography and history! The Empress her mother sums up (in 1771) her daughter's talents and accomplishments in the following words:—"La lecture vous est plus nécessaire qu'à une autre, n'ayant aucun autre acquis; ni la musique, ni le dessin, ni la danse, peinture et autres sciences agréables." Again:—"Ni vos talents ni savoir; vous savez bien que tout cela n'existe pas."

The contrast is rather remarkable, and we see that Madame Campan and "La vraie Marie Antoinette" de M. Avenel, which describes her ignorance as "la plus crasse", are nearer the truth than the "gracieuses ignorances" of MM. de Goncourt; and although these gentlemen particularised the lessons in writing as *the* item of instruction to which the Empress had given special attention, the young Dauphine, it appears, could scarcely form her letters correctly. Marie Thérèse is constantly finding fault with her correspondence needing such continual corrections. She sends two of her daughter's letters, as samples of her deficiencies, to Mercy, who is driven to acknowledge that both in writing and spelling "il y avait beaucoup à désirer." *Vienna Corres.*

We only draw attention, en passant, to this point because M. Vizetelly, who does not fail to bring to our notice the "bad handwriting and worse spelling" of Madame de La Motte, for whom excuses might easily be advanced, passes by in silence similar shortcomings, without such excuse, of the Queen.

at hand wherewith to solve that much disputed problem; all is laid bare for our analysis. We are given, at last, the veritable Marie Antoinette as she reveals herself in her own letters, as she is portrayed by those of her mother, and as she is daily stereographed by her mother's confidant, the Count Mercy.<sup>1</sup>

The authority is unimpeachable. It does not, however, come within our province to follow the 10 years' existence of Marie Antoinette therein so fully developed; our task is limited to the question of the diamond necklace and her possible implication in that affair. We have to take into consideration the assertion that has been advanced of the existence of an intimacy of some sort between the Queen and Madame de La Motte, and see whether any of the personal characteristics of Marie Antoinette, revealed in this correspondence, will admit the possibility of such an hypothesis; our enquiry consequently may be restricted to the moral qualities and conduct, and to any of the personal habits and inclinations of the Queen which may serve to throw any light upon our subject.

The chief objects in life with Marie Antoinette were pleasure and amusement. *Her cravings for amusement.* Its nature and description varied with her years, but "her appetite for pleasure was insatiable."<sup>2</sup> Her mother and the Abbé Vermond, her mentor and

<sup>1</sup> "M. l'Ambassadeur Mouchard" as Michelet not inappropriately styles him.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Yonge.



preceptor, were in despair. It was found quite impossible to fix her attention upon anything of serious import. Her current objection was unanswerable:—"La raison viendrait; mais, avant tout, il fallait s'amuser."

Every allowance of course must be made for her extreme youth and inexperience when arriving in France, but it must not be imagined—as has been too often pleaded—that she was thrown on the world of Versailles without guidance and advice. Few enjoyed greater advantages in the way of counsel than Marie Antoinette and few indeed stood more in need of direction. It was not that she lacked advice, there was abundance always at hand; the misfortune was that she too constantly rejected the advice proffered.<sup>1</sup> Theoretically, the most submissive of daughters, the most docile of pupils, she accepted her mother's admonitions and the guidance of Mercy, or of the Abbé Vermond, with a fund of apparent amiability. But she was practically self-willed. The best advice was thrown aside when it crossed any of her innumerable caprices. Her wilfulness was unscrupulous, both as regards the manner in which it affected its aims and the consequences it might entail.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "V. M. n'a jugé que trop vrai sur l'attachement de la reine à ses volontés, et sur son extrême adresse à saisir tous les faux-fuyants qui peuvent dérouter les remontrances." Again: "Vous trouverez dans sa réponse une nouvelle preuve combien elle aime à éluder tout bon avis." Similar complaints are frequent.

<sup>2</sup> "Je connais ma fille assez," writes the Empress in 1770, "pour être bien persuadée qu'elle viendra à bout de tout ce qu'elle souhaite, et osera beaucoup."

Her earliest cravings for amusement seem to have found vent in the innocent pastime of romping with dirty dogs and equally dirty children, at the expense of soiling her clothes, breaking the furniture, and turning everything topsy-turvy in her apartments; while her chief out-door amusement was donkey riding.

A less harmless diversion was found in what MM. de Goncourt qualify as her "*La Moqueuse*." "bonheurs indiscrets de la parole." Historical accuracy would describe this diversion as the art of ridiculing and making fun of her surroundings, in which practice she was quite an adept; knowing how to give to her acts and remarks "tout l'esprit et le sel propre à les rendre plus piquantes," as Mercy explains.

The ladies of the Court were catalogued under three classes, "les siècles, les Collets-montés, et les Paquets. Madame de Noailles was re-baptised "Madame Etiquette", and others received more or less appropriate nicknames. Marie Antoinette acquired, by way of retaliation, that of "La Moqueuse".

This "sobriquet" was, evidently, fairly earned and not to be wondered at, for we find her mother censuring her "habit of turning people into ridicule and bursting out laughing in their faces."

The donkey riding was naturally succeeded by riding on horseback. This new exercise, however, proved so attractive in every respect, and grew into such a



"passion" that it gave rise to certain fears, and consequent objections, on the part of her mother, into the motives of which we need not here enter. But these objections led to an incident which must be recorded, since it illustrates how little dependence could be placed on any promise of the young princess, however solemnly made, and how she would endeavour, by subterfuges, to avoid detection.

"I give you my word that I will never follow the chase on horseback."

This promise was volunteered to the ambassador Mercy in order to gain his favourable intercession and induce him to support and justify her proceedings in his letters to her mother.

To the Empress she writes to the same effect.

"I take you at your word," replies her mother who, however, evidently entertained private misgivings, for she adds:—"No excuses, or subterfuges on this point; I hold you to the promise you have made never to follow the chase."

The misgivings of the Empress were only too well grounded, for the Dauphine broke her word.

Having done so, her next move was to palm off some plausible "subterfuge."

"S.A.R."—explains Mercy to the Empress—"has slightly broken the promise she gave never to join the chase on horseback. She followed a stag-hunt under the pretext of having met the chase by pure chance. Madame the Archduchess," he adds, "had strongly

enjoined secrecy, especially as regards me. She believes I am not aware of the circumstance."

But other meetings followed, and these the young princess wished to be equally attributed to chance, until Mercy found it necessary to point out "with respectful frankness" as he expresses it:—"que des hasards que l'on peut faire naître quand l'on veut ressemblent trop à des détours etc."

Marie Thérèse, in reply to her daughter's very tardy explanations, *when found out*, merely observed that her excuses might have been all very well had she been told when the circumstance first occurred, some twelve months past, or more.

It is clear that the veritable Dauphine of the Vienna Correspondence did not quite come up to the romantic descriptions of her courtly historians; but we need not dwell longer on a subject that does not directly touch the point we have to consider. We pass on to one of more importance, a characteristic more immediately interesting since it leads straight to the question at issue.

Since Marie Antoinette persistently denied all connection with Madame de La Motte, and maintained she had never even seen her; that she knew nothing about the negotiations effected in her name in respect to the necklace until the matter was officially brought to her notice; since also her simple word, in denial, has been advanced as all sufficient; it becomes a point of some considerable

*Marie  
Antoinette's  
titles to  
veracity.*



importance to test the value of such negations. Are they to be accepted in all confidence as suggested? What, in short, are the claims of the Queen to veracity?

*Sincerity and truth, 1773.* Writing in 1773, the Empress estimates her daughter's sincerity and truth in the following words:—

“Sur ce point, je vous avoue, je ne suis pas tranquille ; je la trouve trop souvent en défaut, et elle sait s'en tirer que trop finement, et donner des tournures, même au dépens de la vérité.”

*Perfect mistress in the art of dissimulation 1776.*

Now a very remarkable instance of studied double-dealing, showing a skilfulness beyond her years in acting a part to gain an end, is to be met with in the Guines' affair, which led to that “fâcheux épisode”, the dismissal of the minister Turgot.

*The Guines' affair.*

Marie Antoinette was now Queen, and the Count de Guines, notorious for his gallantries, in high favour.<sup>1</sup> The King had recalled this gentleman from his embassy in London at the instigations of his ministers, Vergennes and Turgot; the Queen, we are told, consequently brooded revenge on these “detested” ministers who had had the audacity to thwart her fancies, and the more effectually to carry out her designs, she armed herself with dissimulation.

<sup>1</sup> “Tout faisait de lui un personnage qui pouvait prétendre à de grands succès auprès des femmes... de Berlin il passa à Londres continuer sa vie d'homme à bonnes fortunes, car, en 1773, il n'était question que de ses amours avec Lady Craven.

A. Gobez. See also the “Mémoires du Duc de Lauzun”, p. 136.

While privately doing her best to irritate her husband against Turgot, she evinced in public a marked coolness toward her favourite Guines; scarcely deigned to notice him. It was generally thought she had altogether abandoned the cause of the Count.

Suddenly the world of Versailles was enlightened by a startling proof to the contrary, and at the same time the enormous power the Queen now exercised over her husband was manifested in the most striking manner possible.

*Her power  
over her  
husband.*

Her growing influence over the King had previously been exhibited in the exile of the Duc d'Aiguillon, which was entirely her work in furtherance of "un esprit de vengeance."<sup>1</sup>

She now makes her submissive husband write a letter to de Guines, (just publicly recalled under a cloud,) expressive of satisfaction at his conduct, and announcing the favour he is pleased to accord by making him a duke.

Three times did the Queen make her uxorious spouse re-write this letter, never deeming it sufficiently gracious!

But reparation was not sufficient to satisfy her revenge. Even the dismissal of the two ministers was not enough. Her design was to have Turgot lodged in the Bastille. The strongest, the most pressing representations—we are told—were

*Her vindictiveness.*

<sup>1</sup> "Vienna Correspondence," also see her letter to the Count of Rosenberg, July 13th. p. 146.



found necessary to arrest the Queen's proceedings, and restrain her outburst of anger, which had no other foundation than the steps he had thought it his duty to take for the recall of the Count from his embassy in London.

*And deliberate falsehood.*

And Marie Antoinette then "avec un air de feinte innocence," deliberately wrote to her mother that she had had nothing to do with the dismissal of this Minister! <sup>1</sup>

Running through the "Vienna Correspondence" we find frequent complaints of the Queen's "habit of prevaricating" and "dissembling," of her "subterfuges" and "want of truth";—also of her remarkable adroitness "à saisir des échappatoires pour colorer ses actions"—as her mother expresses it.

*Observations as bearing on the intrigue.*

In face of the foregoing it can no longer be pretended that the simple unsupported denial by Marie Antoinette of any connection with Madame de La Motte is of the slightest

<sup>1</sup> "Je ne m'en suis pas mêlée."

Mr. Morley writes à propos:—"To levity she added both dissimulation and vindictiveness. Against Turgot she conspired with tenacious animosity, because he had suppressed a sinecure which she designed for a court parasite, and because he would not support her caprice on behalf of a worthless creature of her faction." "The Queen wrote to her mother that she had not meddled in the affair. This was a falsehood, for she had even sought to have Turgot thrown into the Bastille."

*Critical Miscellanies.*

The Prince de Montbarry gives in his Memoirs the details of a "terrible scene of violent passion and bitter reproaches to which he had been subjected, for having opposed, unintentionally, the promotion of some officer—her protégé. The fury of the Queen seemed quite uncontrollable."

value. It is clear she would not hesitate to deny what she did not choose to confess, and act a part to conceal the truth when it suited her interests.

The undoubted skill she possessed in dissimulating easily explains her most extraordinary bearing towards the jeweller Bœhmer—that otherwise incomprehensible inability to grasp a fact that everyone was echoing in her ears. At all events we see that she was quite capable of acting the rôle attributed to her,—that of cleverly feigning ignorance about a circumstance she did not choose to understand.

It is further important to notice a curious identity in the dissimulation confessedly practised by the Queen in this Guines affair, and that she was accused, by the jeweller, of practising in relation to the Cardinal, viz.—feigning a marked coolness towards him in public to cover a private understanding and thereby throw dust in the eyes the world.<sup>1</sup>

Again:—if—as has been advanced—the Queen, influenced by motives of intense personal animosity against the Cardinal, and “eager for his destruction,” had gone so far as to demand his life of the King,<sup>2</sup> such would have been merely a repetition of the style of vindictiveness she had previously attempted against Turgot: and we see how capable she was of disguising her wrath—as Madame de La Motte represents her throughout the necklace affair—while secretly

<sup>1</sup> Campan.      <sup>2</sup> Vizetelly.



nursing revenge, and plotting a favourable opportunity for carrying it out.

*Queen's society and favourites.* The next point which has any bearing upon the subject under our consideration involves the much disputed topic of the personal inclinations, habits, and conduct of the Queen. One of the arguments advanced against the possible existence of any intimacy between the Queen and Madame de Valois is—that the latter was a woman of too bad a reputation to have had any chance of being distinguished by the royal favour.

In order to test the value of such an argument we must take a glance at the interior of the Court and the “société intime” of the Queen. This will give us an idea of the sort of people who had the entrée, and enjoyed her favour, and furnish a fair criterion upon which to form our judgment.

The Vienna Correspondence, fortunately, supplies all the data required for estimating the characters, morals, manners, and occupations of those who prominently figured in that curious society.

*Amusements and dissipation. “Petit Trianon.”* It was not until Marie Antoinette became Queen that she was able to enjoy life as she understood enjoyment. Trianon then became the centre of attraction, a sort of enchanting “oasis in the desert” midst state formalities and the wearisome pomps of a Court. Here she could indulge to her heart’s content in retirement. Here she could satisfy her caprices free from restraint, and,

surrounded by that intimate society with which she was so enraptured, organise "ce système d'amusements et de dissipations auquel elle est si attachée."<sup>1</sup>

If we had to accept the teaching of some 1776. of her historians, we should have to picture to ourselves a young Queen "setting herself resolutely to work by her admonitions, and still more effectually by her example, to purify the Court... discountenancing vice and impiety by her marked reprobation, and reserving all her favour and protection for genius, patriotism, and honour, and virtue."<sup>2</sup>

Facts, unfortunately, do not support this picture.

The Abbé Vermond discloses the only *The Abbé Vermond.* qualification which was found necessary to secure a favourable reception by Marie Antoinette. He gives us the epitome of a conversation between the Queen and himself, highly curious and instructive, in the course of which the Abbé observed:—

"Je n'ai pu, moi, vous rendre raisonnable! par exemple, vous êtes devenue fort indulgente sur les mœurs et la réputation de vos amis et amies... à votre âge cette indulgence, surtout pour les femmes, fait un mauvais effet; mais enfin je passe que vous ne preniez garde ni aux mœurs ni à la réputation d'une femme, que vous en fassiez votre société, votre amie, uniquement parce qu'elle est aimable... mais que l'inconduite en tout genre, les mauvaises mœurs,

<sup>1</sup> Vienna Correspondence.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Yonge and MM. de Goncourt.



les réputations tarées et perdues soient un titre pour être admis dans votre société, voilà ce qui vous fait un tort infini."

The Queen listened to this sermon with a smile. She only ventured to make one exception to this sweeping condemnation, in favour of Madame de Lamballe.<sup>1</sup>

*The* The high favour of this princess is  
*Madame de* contemporary with the "Petit Trianon." She  
*Lamballe of* is represented by "the faithful" and their  
*Monsieur de* successors in the stereotyped language.  
*Lescure.*

*And MM.* The disinterested nature of this "pas-  
*de Goncourt.* sionate" affection is extolled;—an attachment of which the princess never took advantage to make it "the motive or excuse for a single importunity"; an affection too pure to be subject even to jealousies. Not a cloud, we are assured, obscured this really touching liaison. It is the epoch of the "bals intimes" in the apartments of the "Superintendent", as this lady had been nominated in 1775, and of the pastoral "villégiatures" at the Trianon.

The ephemeral liaisons of Marie Antoinette with the Duchess de Pesquigny, with Madame de Saint-Mégrin and Madame de Cossé, had been replaced, by a veritable friendship for Madame de Lamballe, who never demanded anything neither for herself nor for others.

During 1774—5 Marie Antoinette scarcely appeared without her "inséparable."

<sup>1</sup> Vienna Correspondence.

But alas! as its novelty wore off the favour of the princess languished "eclipsed by the rival star of Madame de Polignac."

Though M. de Lescure confesses that the reasons for this change have been shrouded in mystery,<sup>1</sup> he proceeds to solve the mystery by explaining how, as a consequence of so assiduous and intimate a daily intercourse, the time came when the Queen and Madame de Lamballe found that they really had nothing to say to one another, save repeating what they had already said so many times. The moment of lassitude and satiety naturally arrived; but still he represents the rising favour of Madame de Polignac as simply a passing preference for another lady who had, in the eyes of the Queen, the superiority of novelty.

We in no wise question the correctness of this rather naïve explanation. Passing preferences for novelties of this description were evidently the favourite pastime of the Queen.<sup>2</sup>

M. de Lescure's portrait of a princess "equally inaccessible to envy as to ambition, and who never exhibited the slightest vexation at the ascending credit of Madame de Polignac gradually eclipsing her own," cannot be accepted for historical. The Madame de

*Madame de Lamballe of the "Vienna Correspondence".*

<sup>1</sup> Pour des causes demeurées mystérieuses, mais faciles à deviner.

<sup>2</sup> She confessed to her brother, with a certain reticence, the passionate infatuations she had entertained for certain ladies of her circle.

*A. Jobez.*



Lamballe as she appears in the Vienna Correspondence, does not resemble the heroine of MM. de Lescure and de Goncourt, when we are admitted behind the scenes. Here we are shown a lady who "abused her position by reiterated importunities," and who had no intention of relinquishing the position of first favourite without a struggle.

The Queen experienced, we are told, very considerable embarrassment in her vain endeavours to maintain even a semblance of harmony between the rival claimants for her favours, and scenes the reverse from agreeable took place. Their jealousies in time became most troublesome and pressing, even importunate. As Madame de Polignac rose in favour so did Madame de Lamballe sink, — indeed "became an object of ennui and disgust."

However, since it would not have answered the Queen's designs to manifest, too openly, this change of sentiment, she continued to pass some hours with the princess occasionally, which, we read, bored her considerably. Her society, in short, came to be simply "tolérée, et presque toujours avec ennui," and the past intimacy was finally ended by her rarely appearing at Court.

*Madame de Polignac.* In the meantime Madame Jules de Polignac had risen to the position of prime favourite.

Now this lady, we learn, from contemporaneous Memoirs hitherto regarded as libellous, "had so little consideration for the source whence she derived

her power, that she even ventured to introduce her lover into the intimate society of the Queen.<sup>1</sup>

This connection was so well understood that invitations to supper etc. for Madame de Polignac would necessitate invitations being equally sent to her lover, the Count de Vaudreuil. To have omitted this delicate attention would have been looked upon as a want of politeness and good taste, which no lady of the "grand monde" would have incurred. Her husband never dreamed of objecting.<sup>2</sup>

Her daughter, who became Duchess de *Madame de Guiche*, was one of the most charming ornaments of her mother's salon—a shocking training certainly for any young girl.<sup>3</sup> It is not, therefore, surprising to learn that Madame de Guiche, finding few attractions in her husband, decided on following her mother's example and the prevailing fashion, and selected a very desirable substitute in Count Archamband de Talleyrand, one of the most fascinating men of the day, "et surtout à la mode par une foule de succès et d'aventures; M. de Guiche fut oublié."<sup>4</sup>

Any similar testimony of the foregoing character has, of course, been invariably looked upon by Royal apologists and by "the faithful" as simply libellous, and treated with the silent contempt it seemed in their eyes to deserve.

<sup>1</sup> Soulavie.

Memoirs of the Duchess d'Abrantes. Cor. Sec. Count de Tilly.

<sup>3</sup> "École bien scabreuse."

<sup>4</sup> D'Abrantes.



Contemporary Memoirs, however, contain much correct and valuable information, and by comparing them together we gain a pretty just estimate of the scenes they describe. The Count Mercy completely corroborates the foregoing estimate of the claims of Madame de Polignac to morality and decorum. "Madame Jules de Polignac"—he writes—"is quite above what *les esprits faibles* call prejudices. Her liaison with the Count de Vaudreuil is an acknowledged fact. He is not only her *ami trop intime*, but also *beaucoup trop affiché*."

Marie Antoinette, we are informed, was perfectly aware of this fact; indeed did not attempt to deny it when her mother wrote to her on the subject.

Countess  
d'Andlau.

Now Madame de Polignac unfortunately exercised an enormous and dangerous influence over the Queen, and was herself much under the influence of her surroundings. She was greatly led by an aunt who had brought her up, the Countess d'Andlau, a notorious intriguer of very bad reputation.<sup>1</sup> This lady, some twenty years back, had been exiled from the Court and dismissed the service of Madame Adelaide, the late King's daughter, for supplying the young princess with obscene literature,—a circumstance well-known to Marie Antoinette, as Mercy acknowledges.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Perdue de réputation."

<sup>2</sup> "Il s'agit du 'Portier des Chartreux' illustré de gravures très-libres. La curieuse et espiègle Adelaide, vierge de quatorze, l'avait trouvé de son goût, et Mme. Henriette l'eut après sa soeur."

See Appendix No. 8.

Michélet.

The presiding genius of this society appears to have been Madame Diane de Polignac, equally distinguished in the annals of gallantry. *Countess Diane de Polignac.*

She was decidedly plain, we read, and a Canoness; but these drawbacks were found to be no insuperable obstacle to her practising the current morality. She had a son by the Marquis d'Autichamp,<sup>1</sup> who entered the Russian service and fell at Austerlitz.

This lady had been "dame de compagnie" to the Countess d'Artois,<sup>2</sup> and the Queen got her appointed "dame d'honneur" to Madame Elizabeth, the King's sister. She was a person of very superior talents, with a remarkable energy of character, and made all bend to her superior will.

This selection of the Countess Diane, for the first post in the household of the young Princess Elizabeth, is a very striking proof that morality in a candidate was considered altogether a superfluous qualification.

Another lady for whom the Queen conceived one of her strong affections, a favourite whose "société bruyante" she delighted to frequent, was the Princess de Guéménée. *Princess de Guéménée.*

"Her reputation was very far from intact." She lived apart from her husband, and her liaison with the Duc de Coigny was "a well-known and admitted fact."

The Queen was in the habit of frequenting the

<sup>1</sup> "Elle avait des mœurs fort décriées."

<sup>2</sup> Appendix No. 9.



evening receptions of this princess, though perfectly conversant with her character and reputation. The Emperor Joseph accompanied his sister on one occasion and was perfectly shocked by the "heavy play", the description of people he met, and the air of licence that prevailed. This princess was, in the Queen's presence, reproached for "suspicious play." The Emperor told his sister, point-blank, "que la maison était un vrai tripot."

*Countess de Dillon.* The Prince de Guéménée consoled himself elsewhere; among others with the Countess de Dillon, another favourite of the Queen. This liaison was equally "chose connue et acceptée."

She would appear to have enjoyed very considerable favour; had for a time disputed that of Madame de Lamballe; then had a second turn of favour in 1780, when she was made an extra "dame du palais" and caused quite a sensation at Versailles, being regarded as a rival to Madame de Polignac.

The foregoing glimpse at a few of the leading ladies of the "société intime" of Marie Antoinette will give an idea of its moral tone, and characteristics. Though a mere sketch, the outlines are sufficiently clear to enable our readers to fill in the details without too much taxing their imaginations, and we do not need to carry the inquiry further. We are, however, fairly entitled to draw the following conclusion in support of our argument:—though Madame de La Motte may have been "*a creature*" in the estimation of certain

writers, it is anyhow admitted she was a very fascinating one of most bewitching address and exceptionally irresistible manners. She further possessed that magnetic "*superiority of novelty*" so attractive, we have seen, to Marie Antoinette. As regards her antecedents, they would never, evidently have stood in the way, or formed any obstacle to favour in the eyes of a royal lady who, we are told, "*passé tout à ceux qui se rendent utiles à ses amusements,*" and to whom the morals and reputation of a lady were of little moment providing she were "*aimable.*"

We will now glance at some of the amusements of this society, and see how it passed its time at Trianon and elsewhere.

*Amusements  
of the Queen  
and her  
society.*

The topics of conversation current among the fair shepherdesses of those pastoral "*villégiatures*" at the little Trianon, of which we have heard so much, were:—"La chanson nouvelle, le bon mot du jour, les petites anecdotes scandaleuses." Such—confesses one of the Queen's apologists—constituted "*les seuls sujets d'entretien du cercle intime de la Reine.*"<sup>1</sup>

Besenal writes:—

"La reine s'amusait de l'historiette du jour, de petites libertés gazées avec adresse, et surtout de la médisance, comme on la prépare à la cour; voilà ce qui lui plaît. Hors quelques romans, elle n'a jamais ouvert un livre."

The Emperor Joseph corroborates the foregoing, since he writes cautioning his sister to "shun such conversa-

<sup>1</sup> Campan.



tions, the sole attractions whereof were scandal and the curiosity to learn "les aventures et commérages de la cour"; and further condemns "the indecencies with which she replenished her imagination by the books she read."

The life at Trianon may have resembled in some respects the pastoral spectacles depicted by romantic writers, but it was certainly intermingled frequently with episodes the reverse of pastoral; it was strangely varied by scenes of dissipation, by frivolities or worse.<sup>1</sup>

*Madame Elizabeth at the Trianon.* The very practical condemnation by Madame Elizabeth of the goings-on at Trianon confirms this view. When present, she kept herself quite retired, almost in solitude. Her sojourn there was a simple act of complaisance tempered by circumspection, but not at all to her taste.

Had the life there generally resembled the pastoral simplicities handed down to us, would she thus have withheld her countenance, or shut herself off in such seclusion.<sup>2</sup>

*The "model prince," the Count d'Artois.* When the Queen appeared in public her general companion was the Count d'Artois. MM. de Goncourt describes this young prince in the following terms:—

"Sortant de l'enfance, le Comte d'Artois annonçait

<sup>1</sup> "On s'amusa d'une grande variété de jeux peu décens."

*Soulavie.*

<sup>2</sup> See: "Eloge historique de Madame Elizabeth de France", par Ant Ferrand. Paris 1814.

déjà le vrai modèle d'un prince français. Déjà il réalisait les traits d'un héros de chevalerie, et c'est demain que le monde le surnomméra 'Galaor'."

Now the veritable Count d'Artois was in reality a youth who observed neither dignity or measure in his conduct. He was an inveterate gambler, inclined to intemperance, and much given to most decided libertinism. After spending his days in practising one frivolity or another, he would start at midnight for Paris and the Palais Royal, remaining in that choice rendezvous of licentiousness till any hour in the morning.<sup>1</sup>

We can readily understand that the very familiar intercourse of such a "model prince" with the Queen was looked upon as highly objectionable; all the more so since it appears he was in the habit of "retailing his confidences to Marie Antoinette," which necessitated certain "d'aveux indécents." When admonished on this head, the Queen wrote to her mother in the usual style: "sa chère maman peut être assurée que je sais l'arrêter dès qu'il commence des polissonneries etc."!

The value of these assurances is highly questionable, but we clearly comprehend the nature of such confidences, and the "far too familiar footing" of their daily intercourse.

Their "shocking familiarity", indeed, formed the subject of repeated remonstrances.

<sup>1</sup> "Il ne pense qu'à une dissipation effrénée qu'il satisfait sans réserve."  
*Vienna Correspondence.*



*Horse  
racing.*

Mercy informs the Empress that the Queen made a pretence of disapproving the general conduct of the Count, but that her observations on the subject were quite at variance with her behaviour, since she appeared to countenance the same by being seen invariably in his company in a way to give rise to the hostile criticism of the public.

At the races for instance. Mercy describes the scene at one of the meetings, where the Queen appeared completely surrounded by a crowd of young folk, a regular "pêle-mêle", kicking up a row sufficient to drown any conversation, while they pillaged the table of its ample collation. The Count d'Artois was conspicuous as usual, complaining very grievously if he lost, or giving way to a pitiable joy when he won, and presenting the winning jockeys to the Queen.

She was his companion everywhere; in the tennis court, where the society was not of the choicest description and betting the order of the day; or playing billiards in the Grand Salon of the Château amidst a "tourbillon de jeunesse"; driving with him publicly in the "Bois", or to the hounds, in a tête-à-tête open trap in which the occupants stood, and which enjoyed the characteristic nickname of—"un diable"!

These occasional verbal disapprobations were, in fact, a mere cloak to cover the direct countenance given by the Queen's very inconsiderate conduct.

*Bagatelle.*

The Count had, at the time we are speaking of, a favourite hunting-box in the "Bois",

called "Bagatelle". Its origin was almost fabulous. An old building standing on the site had to be pulled down, rebuilt from bottom to top, newly furnished etc. and a fête given to the Queen all within six or seven weeks. This undertaking formed the terms of a wager between them. Nine hundred workmen were employed day and night. There was a deficiency of materials; so the Count gave directions that patrols of the Swiss Guards should be ordered to seize every cart they came across in the public roads containing any of the materials of which they were short.

"This sort of violence revolted the public", but "Bagatelle" was completed and the ball came off, and "Bagatelle" afterwards became a very favourite rendezvous where the Queen, when sledging or hunting, or attending the races, would breakfast or dine with the Count and his friends.

During the carnival of 1776 we read that the Queen contrived to accumulate, "from sheer inattention and the vivacity of her character,"—as Mercy apologetically explains to her mother—a vast number of indiscretions which gave rise to "impressions, very vexatious." There were two balls at the Palais Royal given by the Duc de Chartres, at this period in very high favour; also certain "bals-masqués" at the opera that were sources of very much "inquiétude". Here, surrounded by a crowd of young people, and midst all the incidental familiarities of the disorderly scene, the Queen would

*The "bals  
masqués"  
etc. 1776.*



remain till six in the morning, the Count d'Artois her invariable escort.

These balls undoubtedly gave rise to "adventures", and there cannot be any question regarding the character of these adventures, since they necessitated "most energetic representations" being addressed to the Queen.

Mercy quite groans over Marie Antoinette's total oblivion of all dignity of conduct, and is driven to point out to her mother the dangerous consequences that might result from "inconveniences" so continually arising, that it was more than he and the Abbé could arrange to anticipate, or ward them off.

Their "most energetic representations" were received, as usual, with an infinity of grace and condescension, but they were met with the stereotyped rejoinder, "qu'il fallait bien jouir un peu du temps de la jeunesse, que le moment de réflexion viendra, et qu'alors les frivolités disparaîtront,"—a paraphrase of her famous "avant tout il faut s'amuser.

*Madame Campan's version of the "fiacre adventure."* Madame Campan retails an incident in connection with these "bals-masqués,"—"une aventure si bizarre," as she explains, which, though of itself most simple, gave rise to very vexatious suspicions regarding the Queen's conduct. Marie Antoinette started one evening for the opera, she tells us, accompanied by the Duchess de Luynes. Her carriage broke down on entering Paris, and they were obliged to take refuge in a shop while the "valet-de-pied" procured a cab... The cir-

cumstance would have remained altogether unknown but for the Queen herself who, on arriving at the opera, exclaimed:—"C'est moi en fiacre, n'est-ce pas bien plaisant?" From this moment all Paris was acquainted with the story of the "fiacre." It was said that this night adventure was shrouded in mystery; that the Queen had granted a rendezvous, in some private house, to "un seigneur honoré de ses boutés," and the Duc de Coigny was openly named.<sup>1</sup>

Parisian rumour was certainly, on this occasion, considerably better informed than Madame Campan. *The Vienna version.*

The Queen really started from Versailles attended by one of her ladies of honour, the most compromising, the Princess d'Henin, not by the Duchess de Luynes. On arriving in Paris she alighted at the private residence of the Duc de Coigny, as rumour had correctly circulated. From the residence of this gentleman the Queen and princess subsequently started in a private carriage, and masked so as not to be recognised. It was this conveyance that broke down, and being quite alone—without even Madame Campan's improvised "valet-de-pied"—they were necessitated to enter the nearest place of refuge, a silk mercer's, and hail the first passing cab.

It is clear from the foregoing corrected version that either Madame Campan was ignorant of the real cir-

<sup>1</sup> Publicly credited with being one of the Queen's lovers. His liaison with Madame de Guéménée was "an admitted fact."



cumstances of the adventure, or that she suppressed what she knew in order to give a different colouring to the affair.

*Nocturnales.* The Count d'Artois originated in the 1777. summer of 1777 a novel species of amusement, in those famous "nocturnales."

In August of that year the bands of the French and Swiss Guards were directed to play of an evening on the terraces of the gardens at Versailles, and, as a matter of course, crowds of people congregated including the populace of the royal borough. In the midst of this "mob" the members of the royal family were in the habit of promenading, "without any suite and almost disguised". At times the Queen and the princesses would appear together, sometimes they would stroll about separately, each arm in arm with one of their ladies in attendance.

These midnight rambles proved highly attractive, and did not—as Mercy had fondly hoped—come to an end with the fine weather, never to be resumed. They were repeated during the summers of '78 and '79 and often prolonged till early morning.

Writing to the Empress in 1779, Mercy acknowledges that notwithstanding all the precautions taken to minimise "the inconveniences" of the midnight promenades, there had nevertheless resulted far too many; and what Mercy qualifies, so frequently, as "inconveniences" had a very comprehensive signification. It was found scarcely possible to keep off the crowd and the bad company,

which often approached much too near the members of the royal family, and exposed them to a "pêle-mêle peu convenable."

It needs but little imagination to picture the scenes said to have occurred at these "nocturnales." Madame Campan, while trying to extenuate their objectionable character, admits that individuals would occasionally sit on the benches by the side of the princesses, and enter into conversation,—a kind of adventure which appears to have afforded the royal ladies considerable amusement.

*Explanation  
of Madame  
Campan.*

For instance:—"Un jeune commis de la guerre, assez spirituel et d'un fort bon ton", spoke to the Queen, who, thinking she had not been recognised, found it highly diverting to chat under cover of her "incognito."

This "incognito" appears to have consisted only of a large bonnet and muslin veil, consequently the young gentleman knew perfectly well with whom he had been chatting, and the incident became public "through his indiscretion."

"On lui fit dire de se taire."

But why? If the subject of their conversation had been so perfectly inoffensive—"the beauty of the night, the charming effect of the music etc."—if there was really nothing to be ashamed of, and the Queen had found diversion in his conversation and encouraged it, why was his very pardonable vanity thus summarily suppressed?

Why shut up his mouth if there was nothing to tell?



On another occasion it was a "Garde-de-Corps." Here we are assured the subject of their conversation was simply to engage Her Majesty's interest in favour of some petition at Court. Soulavie, however, says the topic of conversation bore a very different interpretation, and adds that he derived his information direct from the same "Garde-de-Corps".

*Gambling in  
the Queen's  
circle.*

Mercy, we see, was quite driven to despair over some of the "jolies audaces" of Marie Antoinette, and his last report, which closes the correspondence (1780), exposes some of the scandalous scenes that frequently occurred, resulting from another "dangerous amusement" which had, since June 1776, quite engrossed her thoughts and occupations—gambling.

Marie Antoinette was an inveterate gambler, eschewing all moderate stakes, and by her example giving considerable encouragement to high play. During the season of 1779 the Princess de Guéménée was in the habit of holding re-unions every Saturday, at which the Queen would invariably assist, and the soirée was enlivened by "heavy play." When the King was expected, we read that the cards and tables were always most carefully removed out of sight before his arrival! Marie Thérèse was highly disgusted at these "clandestine" proceedings.

*Fontaine-  
bleau, 1776.*

The apartments of the Princess de Lamballe likewise served as a rendezvous for gambling. The stakes were "enormous" and the play

lasted, occasionally, through the night, the Queen remaining till 3 or 5 a.m.

The Queen lost heavily and the King was frequently called upon to pay debts of this description. She would lose from 3 to 5 hundred louis a night, playing till early morning.

Scandals were the inevitable result. These *Scandals.* soirées became at times scenes of tumult. Ladies of the Court were reproached for cheating; the Duc de Fronsac and the Countess de Gramont had “une scène assez vive en ce genre”; the Princess de Guéménée in the Queen’s presence was accused of suspicious play. Exhibitions of this description, which it was quite impossible to ignore, gave rise to all sorts of unpleasant remarks.

Joseph II. wrote to his sister on the sub- *The Em-  
peror’s letter  
to his sister.* ject of her gambling propensities, and the scandalous cheating of certain ladies at her tables at Fontainebleau, concluding his letter by observing that he should not try his eyes by writing further on this head, since he had already, but to no purpose, exhausted his lungs by preaching.

The reply of Marie Antoinette, was mild enough, but, as Mercy points out—evasive, since it was based solely on an “échappatoire,” and a pretended ignorance of facts of which she was but too well aware.

The use of his lungs, which the Emperor *His  
memoranda.* recalls to mind in the foregoing letter, had reference to the period of his late visit to Paris, when



he had given his sister counsel and advice on various subjects, and—at her special and earnest request—committed the substance of his remarks to writing, to be retained by her for study and guidance.

*Letter of Marie Antoinette to her mother on the subject. June 14, 1777.* Marie Antoinette wrote a highly characteristic note to her mother on this subject, which we give in its integrity as a specimen well worth recording. It is taken from the autograph collection of M. F. de Conches.

“Versaille, le 14 Juin 1777.

“Madame ma tres chere Mere,

“il est vrai que le depart de l'empereur m'a laissée un vuide dont je ne puis revenir, j'étois si heureuse pendant ce peu de tems que tout cela me paroît un songe dans ce moment-cy, mais tout ce qui n'en sera jamais un pour moi c'est tous les bons conseils et avis qu'il m'a donné et qui sont gravés a jamais dans mon coeur.

“J'avouerai a ma chere maman qu'il m'a donnée une chose que je lui ai bien demander et qui me fait le plus grand plaisir, c'est des conseils par ecrit qu'il m'a laissé: cela fait ma lecture principale dans le moment present, et si jamais ce dont je doute, je pouvois oublier ce qu'il m'a dit j'aurois ailleurs ce papier tousjours devant moi qui me rappelleroit bientôt a mon devoir.

“Ma chere maman aura vu par le courier qui est parti hier combien le roi s'est bien conduit dans les derniers moments que mon frere a été ici, en tout j'ose assurer ma chere maman que je le connois bien et qu'il a été veritablement affecter de ce depart comme il n'a pas tousjours les formes pour lui, il lui est moins aisé de prouver a l'exterieure ses sentiments, mais tout ce que j'en vois me prouve qu'il est bien veritablement attaché a mon frere et qu'il a beaucoup d'amitié pour

lui dans le moment de ce depart ou j'étois le plus au desespoir le roi a eu des attentions et des recherches de tendresse pour moi que je n'oublierai de ma vie et qui m'y attacheroit si je ne l'étois desja.

"il est impossible que mon frere n'ait pas été content de la nation d'icy, car pour lui qui scait examiné les hommes il doit avoir vue que malgré la grande legereté qui est etablie, il y a pourtant des hommes faits et d'esprit et en general un coeur excellent et beaucoup d'envie de bien faire, il n'y a qu'a bien mener. il en voit un exemple a cette heure dans la marine dont il est tres content et dont j'imagine il rendra conte a ma chere maman je recois a l'instant par la poste une lettre de ma chere maman, qu'elle bonté que dans le moment ou elle a tant d'affaires elle veut bien encore penser a mon jour de nom, cela me rend bien confuse. elle veut faire des voeux pour mon bonheur, ah le plus grand de tous est de la savoir, contente de moi, de meriter toujours ses bontez et de pouvoir lui persuader quel personne au monde ne l'aime plus tendrement et plus respectueusement que moi

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

At the expiration of two months all of the good counsel and advice engraven in her heart was obliterated and the Emperor's autograph thrown into the fire!

The foregoing specimen of Marie Antoinette's notes to her mother gives a fair idea of their style, orthography and, we may venture to add, their practical value when measured by results.

We have already had occasion to refer frequently to the Memoirs of Madame Campan, and as she is an authority whose simple "ipse dixit" has often been quoted as of sufficient weight to settle any disputed point, it

*Madame  
Campan and  
her repara-  
tive testi-  
mony.*



is material to point out errors, "voluntary or involuntary" when provable by other testimony of more trustworthy character.<sup>1</sup> We have seen that in the affair of the "fiacre" her version is erroneous in many points, and that her explanations regarding the adventures of the "commis de la guerre" and the "Garde-du-Corps", are simply apologetic without being anywise satisfactory. We are unable to trace whence her authority was derived in these instances—presumably from the Queen; but she must, according to her own account, have been most singularly favoured by chance. She is invariably handy when required in the reparative line.

*The Besenval episode.*

At one time she is the favoured recipient of the somewhat strange confidences of her royal mistress regarding a declaration of love. Here the Queen is represented as actually retailing to her lady of the bed-chamber, her own very dignified rebuff to the presumptuous insolence of a Besenval.

*The Lauzun episode.*

On another occasion Madame Campan is a witness to the angry words and gesture with which her insulted Mistress is said to have rebuked the equally insolent advances of the Duc de Lauzun, dismissing him from her presence with a—"Sortez, monsieur."

*The Queen's confidences to Besenval.*

We much question the actuality of these "coups-de-théâtre" as given by Madame Campan; they scarcely harmonize with facts.

<sup>1</sup> Michelet.

We must bear in mind that Besenval had been the acknowledged recipient of certain "confidences plus qu'étranges." It was to this favourite of the day that Marie Antoinette betrayed the secret of the royal alcove, and bewailed her unfortunate conjugal position.<sup>1</sup> This was in '75, and if the baron, under such provocation had indeed fallen at the feet of the Queen with a declaration of love, would she have had anyone more to blame than herself? Did she not almost invite the situation?

But how about the Baron's consequent disgrace?

Strange to say we come across this gentleman in high favour throughout the year '76; and in '79 he is again the object of another very singular mark of the Queen's continued confidence.

He was one of the four gentlemen Marie Antoinette specially selected to serve in the capacity of "nurses", when confined to her apartments with the measles. The three others were Coigny, Guines, and Esterhazy. These four constituted her "garde-malades" to the exclusion of all the ladies of the household. The situation was naturally pronounced "fâcheuse et choquante."

*The four  
"gentlemen  
nurses."*

All sorts of vexatious comments and jokes were the consequence. Injurious ideas were suggested; insinuations of intrigues; personalities etc. formed the general

<sup>1</sup> "Confidences sur ce qui est personnel au roi";—and in a note: "On comprend aisément quelle sorte de confidence Marie Antoinette avait fait au Baron de Besenval."

*Vienna Correspondence.*



topic of conversation. It was mooted who were likely to be the ladies selected by the King under similar circumstances; "facetiae" were current everywhere.

"Thank Heaven"—concludes Mercy—"that this 'fâcheuse époque' is at an end." We can fully understand and sympathise with his sense of relief when we learn that he was obliged to invoke the assistance of Abbé Vermond, in addition to that of the doctor, before he could circumvent the "ridiculous idea" that had been actually entertained of these "gentlemen-nurses" remaining on duty all night as well by day!

When the attack had subsided, the Queen, accompanied by her four nurses, started for the Trianon to pass the period of her convalescence in those pastoral amusements we can readily imagine.

The tale of the Baron de Besenval's disgrace, therefore, as given by Madame Campan, is an evident myth.

*The Duc de Lauzun's period of favour.* With regard to the Duc de Lauzun, Madame Campan fixes the scene of his disgrace as following shortly the affair of the heron's plume, which was in the Autumn of 1775.

*La plume de héron.* Anyone at all conversant with the memoirs of the period will have read of this famous plume; of the Queen's expressed admiration; of her acceptance of the plume from this notorious favourite, and then wearing it in public. What can it possibly matter whether the plume had been indirectly *demandé*, as Lauzun relates; or indirectly *offered*, as Madame Campan contends? Anyhow the

Queen's behaviour in the matter invited the presentation; that is admitted.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly afterwards the hero of this adventure is—we are told—dismissed for insolence, never again to be admitted into the royal presence.

Yet we find this banished gentleman enjoying the acme of favour throughout the ensuing year (1776),<sup>2</sup> and in '77 Mercy refers to his continued favour, though trusting he has, at length, succeeded in persuading the Queen to withdraw her confidence, for the future, from this “highly dangerous” favourite.

His extraordinary favour really lasted for fully two years, and was notorious. It was simply terminated by the inconstant character of all the Queen's fancies, and not in the dramatic manner Madame Campan would have us believe.<sup>3</sup>

We give the following extracts from Marie Antoinette's correspondence as offering a curious and quite a novel sample of her epistolary talents. They present a very striking contrast to the sentimental effusions she would pen to her mother, are very characteristic and

*The Queen  
in her con-  
jugal rela-  
tions.*

<sup>1</sup> “Fort embarrassée du présent qu'elle s'était pour ainsi dire attiré, elle n'osa pas le refuser.”

*Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> “Parmi le nombre des étourdis auxquels la reine donne un accès beaucoup trop libre, il en est un fort dangereux... c'est le Duc de Lauzun.”

*Mercy, Dec. 1776.*

<sup>3</sup> We have entered more fully into the character of Madame Campan's Memoirs in the Appendix, where our readers will find some interesting particulars regarding this lady which are not generally known.



serve as an introduction to the subject of her conjugal relations.

They are addressed to the Count de Rosenberg.

*Her letter to the Count de Rosenberg, April 17th.* ... "de bonne foi j'en avouerai plus que vous n'en dites, par exemple mes goûts ne sont pas les mêmes que ceux du roi, qui n'a que ceux de la chasse et des ouvrages mécaniques. Vous conviendriez que j'aurais assez mauvaise grâce auprès d'une forge; je n'y serais pas Vulcain, et le rôle de Vénus pourrait lui déplaire."

*Idem. July 13th.* "Je suis obligée de remonter au départ de M. d'Aiguillon... Ce départ est tout à fait mon ouvrage. La mesure était à son comble; ce vilain homme entretenait toute sorte d'espionnage et de mauvais propos. Il avait cherché à me braver plus d'une fois dans l'affaire de M. de Guines; aussitôt après le jugement j'ai demandé au roi son éloignement. Il est vrai que je n'ai pas voulu de lettre de cachet, mais il n'y a rien perdu... Vous aurez peut-être appris l'audience que j'ai donné au Duc de Choiseul à Reims. On a tant parlé que je ne répondrais pas que le vieux Maurepas n'ait eu peur d'aller se reposer chez lui. Vous croirez aisément que je ne l'ai point vu sans en parler au roi, mais vous ne devinerez pas l'adresse que j'ai mise pour ne pas avoir l'air de demander permission... Je lui ait dit que j'avais envie de voir M. de Choiseul, et que je n'étais embarrassée que du jour. J'ai si bien fait que le pauvre homme m'a arrangé lui-même l'heure la plus commode où je pouvais le

voir. Je crois que j'ai assez usé du droit de femme dans ce moment."

Such were the terms and style in which Marie Antoinette indulged when writing to Count de Rosenberg. Such her ideas of the privileges of a wife!

Her mother was horror-stricken:—"quel style, quelle façon de penser. J'en suis pénétrée jusqu'au fond du coeur etc."... "elle court à grands pas à sa ruine etc."

*Her mother's  
horror.*

Her brother wrote à propos:—"Si jamais une lettre comme celle-là s'égaraît; si jamais—comme je n'en doute presque point,—il vous échappe des propos et phrases pareilles vis-à-vis de vos intimes confidents, je ne puis qu'entrevoir le malheur de votre vie."

*Her brother's  
warning.*

The fears and anticipations of the Emperor were only too accurately realised. Marie Antoinette's confidences to her familiar circle were something more than indiscretions.

Within two years of her marriage Marie Antoinette began to find the society of her husband too often a bore, and did not even take the trouble to hide the fact. Madame de Campan tells us the story of her advancing the hands of the clock, in her impatience to get rid of the King, and start for one of those gambling reunions in the apartments of Madame de Guéménée. Louis XVI., on retiring, found of course none of his personal service ready in attendance. This public indignity, which Madame Campan qualifies as a "plaisanterie", got wind, circulated, and



met with well-merited condemnation. It was quite on a level with the "clandestine" gambling, where her husband was publicly made to appear "de trop."

*The Queen's  
power over  
and cavalier  
treatment of  
her husband.*

The Queen very soon succeeded in acquiring unlimited power over her husband, who, Mercy tells us, could not deny her anything. Louis XVI., was uxorious, and Marie Antoinette quite alive to the situation. She knew her power and how to foster it by judicious management, and exercised her power in a supremely cavalier fashion.

"I always command the means of enslaving him," she coolly observes to Mercy.<sup>1</sup>

In reply to certain suggestions advanced by Mercy as to the beneficial effects of greater attentions, and more consideration for the King's wishes, she gives him to understand that she prefers "le gouverner par la crainte":—and a further hint that the King might,

<sup>1</sup> Here we have another proof how correct Soulavie was in his descriptions:—"La reine plaçait si bien ses complaisances et ses caresses, qu'elle trouva les moyens de se l'assujétir." Again:—"Les refus et les concessions de ses faveurs placés à propos furent ses moyens pour se l'attacher." Mercy gives identical testimony and is equally clear as to the method she adopted to subjugate the King. In two of the notes given by Madame de La Motte as addressed by the Queen to the Cardinal, we come across expressions identical with the reply given by the Queen to Mercy, just quoted, only couched in slightly more familiar language. See knows how "*enchaîner le lion... lui faire voir et croire*" whatever she wishes... "*le monter*" to the point she desires etc., knowing his *foible pour moi*." It is somewhat strange that a note, which so correctly expresses the Queen's actual manner of thinking and speaking of her husband, should be "forged" by a lady who—we are assured—never had any personal intercourse with her!

if neglected, take to gallantry, was met with the observation—that “he was far too apathetic and timid.”

But behind Mercy’s back and to certain of her society Marie Antoinette did not hesitate to be far more communicative and indiscreet; so incautiously addressed, indeed, were her sarcasms, that they travelled round to the ears of Mercy, who thereupon represented forcibly, how highly dangerous it was for Her Majesty thus to allude to the King in terms and tones of such sarcastic indifference etc.

Louis XVI. had really no will of his own in opposition to that of his wife. She held him well-nigh in a state of thralldom. That thrice-written letter to the Duc de Guines may be taken as an illustration of his abject submissiveness to the dictations of his wife.

*The King's  
submission  
to his wife.*

With regard to the liaisons that have been imputed to Marie Antoinette, it must always be borne in mind that, however suggestive any situation might appear, however compromising certain circumstances undoubtedly were, no amount of mere suspicion can justify condemnation. The subject does not directly bear upon our enquiry, so we may put it on one side. The question has been much canvassed, but except in regard to the Count de Fersen, “le beau Fersen”—nothing really tangible appears to be forthcoming.<sup>1</sup>

*The Queen's  
reputed liai-  
sons.*

*“Le Beau  
Fersen.”*

<sup>1</sup> Nothing beyond common report and suspicions resulting from personal imprudencies. See Appendix No. 10.



The Count de Viel-Castel, a chivalrous champion of Marie Antoinette acknowledged, certainly, that Madame Elizabeth entertained "certain suspicions, or rather inquietudes," relative to the conduct of her sister-in-law, but stops there.

We have already alluded to the seclusion observed by this princess at the Trianon, the frivolities of that society being so entirely opposed to her ideas and tastes. The Count attributes to her certain "démarches indiscrètes et des menées hostiles," and cites, in proof, the visits Madame Elizabeth continued to pay to her friend Madame d'Aumale after she had been exiled from Court.

This lady had been dismissed on the pretext of lending herself to some plot having for its object the estranging the affections of Madame Royale, and withdrawing her from the influence of her mother's example.

Such was the public motive assigned for this lady's disgrace. Such a plot, if it really existed, would be suggestive, and very damaging to the reputation of the mother. We may, perhaps, trace a more probable cause in the fact of this lady having, during the course of a conversation with Madame Elizabeth and others, on the subject of the necklace, spoken of the Queen in a manner "très libre", an offence that came round to the ears of Marie Antoinette. This would reduce

<sup>1</sup> "Marie Antoinette et la Révolution Française", par le Comte Horace de Viel-Castel, Paris 1859.

the motive of her disgrace to merely another instance of the Queen's "esprit de vengeance."

However, whatever the motive, Madame Elizabeth clearly marked, by her conduct, her own sense of its injustice; and whether the conversation retailed to the Queen had any, or no share in bringing about the dismissal of Madame d'Aumale, we anyhow see that the conduct of Marie Antoinette in connection with the intrigue of the necklace was very freely strictured by those about the Court, even in the presence of the King's sister.<sup>1</sup>

The course of our enquiries has thus brought us back to the subject of the necklace, and here we may bring to an end a not very enviable task. The sketch we have drawn of the Queen and her society will naturally appear one-sided, since we have had to supplement one-sided romances by throwing light upon those traits of character that have been studiously kept in the dark, and which therefore are not generally known. Such was the task that the nature of the question under consideration imposed upon us. We must bear in mind that Marie Antoinette has been represented as incapable by birth, education, position, and from her own natural instincts, of having ever stooped to countenance any such intrigue as the one we have

*Concluding  
observations.*

<sup>1</sup> Madame Elizabeth, we have seen, had shown considerable interest in Madame de Valois, and favoured her being received at Court when that question was mooted.



been examining. We must remember that history, based on sentiment, had resulted in fiction, and this had to be met by the levelling argument of facts which throw rather a different light on the subject.

The same cause that throughout the past century covered the affair with impenetrable obscurity, and rendered impossible any reasonable solution, still operates to a very great extent. Every suggestion of the possible implication of Marie Antoinette is looked upon as an outrage, and one is confronted at the outset of any enquiry by a stereotyped version of the affair which sentiment, and perhaps other less disinterested motives, formulated, and which time has sanctified, until it is regarded as well-nigh sacrilegious to question its validity.

Yet this solution is based entirely upon an amount of human imbecility admitted to be abnormal, almost supernatural; while even if one could admit such idiocy possible, there would still remain innumerable other difficulties to be got over, or explained in a manner acceptable to common sense.

*The rôle attributed to the Cardinal.* Take for instance the orthodox rôle imputed to the Cardinal.

If he had been befooled in the manner pretended, he would, anyhow, have conducted himself in a fashion consistent with that credulity. If he believed the Queen had really condescended to a midnight meeting, and that her letters—so inciting in character—were genuine, he would have been proportionally bold,

pressing, even importunate, for private interviews. He would never have been put off, month after month, as pretended, with frivolous excuses.

Such unnatural reserve on the part of the most audacious of men under such repeated stimulants is inexplicable. How, too, could he have accepted under such circumstances the Queen's continued "*freezing*" demeanour towards him, unless it covered some private understanding? Not a word, not a sign of any recognition.<sup>1</sup> Was this consistent with the strange familiarity of the notes he received, or the significance of the rendezvous granted? How explain the extraordinary tranquillity and confidence of the Cardinal after his eyes had been, *confessedly*, opened? and his strange conduct towards the "perfidious monster" by whom he had been so very grossly deceived? No burst of wrath, no reproaches; but a friendly shelter and the offer of a safe retreat across the Rhine.

Why did he not come to terms with the jewellers and hush up the affair?—or, as the King himself observed to Madame Campan, "Why did he not communicate either with the Queen or myself?" Why was he instructed to negotiate solely with Bœhmer? Why was the agreement dated three days in advance? One could multiply questions of this sort which have never

<sup>1</sup> The strange coincidence of certain royal "*signs of intelligence*" being alluded to in the Cardinal's correspondence with the Queen, and again in his "*Confidential Declaration*", the same being also recorded in the Memoirs of Georgel, cannot be ignored. The circumstance evidently occurred.



yet been satisfactorily answered. Can anyone swallow his pretended acceptance of that "*grotesque*" signature? How explain his repeated declarations of direct personal communication with the Queen? On three different occasions did the Cardinal affirm his direct relations with Marie Antoinette, and to three different persons. Who received the necklace at the hands of the Cardinal if not the Queen's messenger, as he asserts? Certainly not Villette; for the evidence adduced in proof entirely disproves the argument advanced. Why were several hours of grace so obligingly conceded before sealing up the Cardinal's effects? Was it to enable him to make away with any compromising papers? Why, too, were papers the sole object of search by the authorities, and the destination of the necklace quite ignored?

*The rôle  
imputed to  
Madame de  
Valois.*

As regards Madame de La Motte she must have been a perfect magician. Every plot with which this "*audacious schemer*" is credited succeeds; not a flaw or a hitch anywhere.

She not only dupes the Cardinal as to her relations with the Queen, but also the jewellers; also Achet and Laporte, familiars of the Court; also the Duc de Ponthievre and "all Paris" besides, without the slightest exposure or detection.

She cautions the jewellers to look well to their security, at the risk of marring her whole stratagem; she forges the demand for the reduction of 200,000 frs.

in the price agreed on—a matter that does not interest her one jot; she threatens to return the necklace, already in pieces! She rushes, in fact, headlong into danger when there was nothing to gain; yet each risky move is wonderfully successful.

She forges a whole series of characteristic notes of a royal lady with whom she never communicates, and of whom she knows really nothing; but they succeed most marvellously.

She impresses the attendance of one of the royal carriages, and palms off a false Queen upon a courtier personally well acquainted with the real Queen. Everything succeeds.

She is welcomed to the Episcopal palace, at Saverne, with all the honours due to a royal favourite and royal messenger; yet she is, at the same time, an object of charity, the recipient of his Eminence's "benevolences" in the shape of two or three occasional louis!

The conduct of the Queen, as represented by her apologists, is quite inconsistent with the ignorance of the intrigue with which she is credited. *The Queen's rôle.*

At the time the negotiation was completed Marie Antoinette received a caution from the banker St. James on the subject.

Then followed the jewellers' note. Now this note was evidently either an inconvenient reminder to be ignored, or a mystery to be solved, as, we are told,



the Queen suggested. Yet it was not, as prudence would have dictated, laid on one side, while enquiries into the "mystery" were instituted, but carefully burnt.

Madame Campan soon after retails the whole of the intrigue to the Queen, explaining how her name had been trailed in dirt; but the Queen was only then with difficulty induced to face the jeweller. It is clear Marie Antoinette had no desire either for explanation or a solution of the mystery.

And the comedy of her assumed ignorance that the sale had been effected, after such cautions! And the jewellers' insolent bearing and language so meekly borne.

Explain the hesitation evinced in carrying out the judicial sentence, and the curious interest shown<sup>1</sup> for the defence of Madame de Valois, the *official culprit*, her escape *confessedly* connived at, while the Queen is equally desirous of sending *the official dupe* to the scaffold!

Until the foregoing, and other incongruities which we have pointed out in the course of our analysis, are got over, one must admit that the Queen's possible connivance presents to the ordinary mind a less inconceivable solution than the one offered.

*Hypothesis  
of the  
Queen's  
implication.*

Perfect mistress in dissimulation as Marie Antoinette is shown to have been, this intrigue offered a congenial field of action, whether in furtherance of a political, or other

<sup>1</sup> By de Breteuil, "l'homme de la reine."

connection with the Cardinal, or the satisfaction of some personal revenge. Her evasive conduct in regard to the jeweller; a feigned ignorance of a well-known fact; a bearing in public of coldness to cover some private understanding and throw dust in the eyes of all;—such would be mere repetitions of similar scenes previously rehearsed, as we have seen, on another stage; and it is evidently absurd any longer to pretend that the characteristic proclivities of Marie Antoinette, would render impossible, or even improbable, the idea of her admitting Madame de La Motte into temporary favour on account of her moral shortcomings—quite the contrary.

Taking into consideration the very general belief—as admitted—in the existence of this favour, also the absence of direct proof to the contrary; considering again the acknowledged difficulties that would have rendered well-nigh impossible the successful simulation of any such intimacy; one can only fairly conclude that the same was genuine, and not feigned.

In view, further, of the very bitter animosity admittedly entertained by the Queen towards the Cardinal for some "*atrocities*," or unpardonable offence; in view also of the very unscrupulous morality exhibited by Marie Antoinette when her object might be the satisfaction of vindictive feelings, it becomes quite possible to imagine that, "eager for his destruction," she may have made use of Madame de Valois as a medium for entrapping the Cardinal into the commission of



an act that might be afterwards utilised to compass his ruin.

On this hypothesis the correspondence—dictated probably by the Queen; the scene in the gardens of Versailles—invented presumably as a test, a sort of feeler; and all the subsequent phases of the intrigue become intelligible; each act following as a natural sequence in the contemplated plot.

This appears the only reasonable solution to be drawn from the evidence yet forthcoming; and until the orthodox school of writers can devise some other more satisfactory explanations of the self-evident difficulties and absurdities of their pretended version of the intrigue, the only common-sense conclusion to be arrived at is that Marie Antoinette was undoubtedly implicated in the Affair.

*“Another link in the chain of evidence.”*

The following extract from the “Reminiscences of Prince Talleyrand” would rather tend to corroborate this view of the subject.

He relates:—“There is one more story connected with the jewel, which greatly complicates the mystery of the whole transaction, and which is known but to few persons. During the time that I held the Portefeuille of Foreign Affairs I received a letter from our ambassador at one of the northern courts, wherein he announced to me, with great excitement, the arrival at his court of the Count de M....y and his wife. They had been presented by himself to the sovereign; for, although they might,

strictly speaking, have been considered *émigrés*, not having returned to France during the reign of Napoleon, yet, as the Count was not at that time the head of his family, and had never meddled in politics, he had a right to claim the protection of the ambassador of his country. The lady had chosen for her *début* at court the occasion of a royal birthday, and she had made her appearance laden with all her jewels, and, 'upon her neck,' wrote the baron, 'she wore a necklace of the exact pattern of that, concerning which all Europe had been roused before the Revolution—that is to say, the only difference being, that the three scroll ornaments which are so remarkable, and to which I could swear as being the same, are held by a chain of small rose diamonds instead of the *rivière*, by which they were joined before.'

"The letter gave us all great diversion at home, from the excitement in which it was written; but the Emperor, to whom I of course communicated the fact, took it more gravely and begged me to ask for a drawing of the necklace, which the ambassador found means to obtain, and which was found to correspond with that preserved among the *pièces du procès* in the Archives; moreover, on its being submitted to young Boehmer, he declared his full and entire conviction that the jewel was the same, from the remarkable circumstance of a mistake having occurred in the execution of the middle ornament, one side of the scroll containing two small diamonds more than the other,



and which he remembered had much distressed his father, but which could never have been discovered save by a member of the trade. It was then remembered, and by the Emperor himself first of all, that the lady's mother had been attached to the person of Marie Antoinette, and that she had retired from court and gone to reside abroad soon after the trial of Madame de La Motte !

"So you see there is another link in the chain of evidence which historians, when writing any further history of the Diamond Necklace, would do well to examine."

Madame de Valois was generally reported to have died in London from injuries received by falling from an upper window of the house she occupied; but there seems to be considerable doubt upon this point. Her husband says that in the last letter he received from her, she told him:—"qu'on allait la transporter à la campagne où elle espérait se rétablir."

*Reported  
death in  
London, in  
1791, aged  
35.*

Shortly after he read, in an English paper, an account of her death, which appears to have quite satisfied him as to the fate of a wife he had long since ceased to care for, and he took no steps to verify the report; but since Mme. de Valois had announced that she was going to be moved into the country where she hoped to recover, the reported death in London may have been inserted with the view of anticipating any enquiries as to her existence and whereabouts.

And we read in the "Supercheries Littéraires", tome II, "Au retour de l'émigration, l'Abbé de C..., évêque de..., introduisit dans une noble maison du faubourg Saint-Germain une dame mystérieuse sous le nom de la Comtesse Jeanne; elle reçut

*Reported  
residence in  
Paris, as  
Comtesse  
Jeanne, and  
death in  
1844.*

à la mort du Marquis de L. une pension viagère de 20,000 frs., dont elle a joui pendant trente années environ. Elle mourut à Paris, vers le 20 mai, 1844, et le faubourg Saint-Germain fut en deuil. Dans la chambre de la défunte, on ramassa quelques papiers à moitié brûlés. La dernière heure l'avait surprise pendant qu'elle effeuillait dans les flammes les secrets de sa vie. Le feu n'avait pas tout dévoré, et ce qui restait suffisait pour éclairer le mystère. O stupeur, la Comtesse Jeanne, cette digne et sainte femme, si vénérée, est la Jeanne de Luze de Saint Remy Valois, Comtesse de La Motte, de l'affaire du collier. Réfugiée en Angleterre, les uns disaient qu'elle était morte d'une indigestion, les autres qu'elle s'était jetée par la fenêtre; on n'en parlait plus, et voici qu'on apprend sa mort dans sa quatre-vingt-neuvième année!"

The "Réforme du 1er juin, 1844," also contains a notice of her demise in Paris, about the same time, and of her having succeeded in preserving, for 30 years, an incognito which death alone had disclosed.

So even Madame de Valois' ultimate fate is shrouded in mystery!

Yet there is nothing improbable in this dénouement.



We have seen Madame de la Motte had numerous influential and powerful supporters, devoted to her cause and thoroughly convinced of her innocence, even among the Queen's "*société intime*." We know she was permitted to evade the carrying out of her sentence, and that her husband was awarded a pension by Louis XVIII.

These facts are eloquent, and we conclude, as we began, in the words of L. Blanc:—"Où est la vérité?"

FINIS.

## APPENDIX I.

WHEN Louis XVI. ascended the throne, 1774, the suppression of objectionable writings, or individuals (!), was the practice of the period. The timorous anxiety too often shewn, and the high prices paid, for the destruction of obnoxious publications even led, in some instances, to their fabrication, by way of speculation, for the purpose of reaping the rewards certain to be offered for their suppression.

*Suppression  
of Pam-  
phlets, mem-  
oirs, etc.  
1774.*

Marie Antoinette, we read, was highly sensitive on the subject of these publications against her, and her favourites—male and female. When barely 12 months Queen she sent for the Lieutenant of Police and directed him to take effective measures to suppress the licence with which she was even then spoken of; she wrote letter after letter enjoining the same functionary to discover the writers of these pamphlets.<sup>1</sup>

A mission was despatched in 1774, we are told, to London, with the object of negotiating the purchase of some libel lately published. The individual selected to carry out this secret negotiation was, strange to relate, that

*Mission of  
Beaumarchais to Lon-  
don, 1774.*

<sup>1</sup> A. Jobez 272,503. *Vienna Correspondence.*



“turbulent speculator” Beaumarchais, one of the most notorious personalities of France.<sup>1</sup>

This selection was certainly as unfortunate as was the result. One thousand four hundred pounds were paid for the suppression of the work, which was burnt, but—as might have been expected—one copy escapes the flames for the edification of posterity.

On his return voyage Beaumarchais passed through Vienna, where his conduct appears to have been regarded as highly suspicious. He was credited by the Austrian Government with being himself the Author of the libel, and the suspicion cost him a month’s incarceration; but no proof was brought home to him.<sup>2</sup>

*The Goupil*  
*pamphlet*  
1778.

A similar incident is related by Madame Campan as occurring in 1778.

Some 4000 louis were here thrown away upon another outrageous libel on the Queen, in which most atrocious calumnies were—“présentées avec un art qui pouvait les rendre très-funestes à la renommée de la Reine.”

Goupil, inspector of police, who was commissioned to hunt it up, turned out to be the Author! This fact, however, was not discovered till after the artful representative of authority had pocketed the 4000 louis—“price of the zeal and intelligence” exhibited in unearthing his own manuscript,—but fortunately in time to prevent his contemplated appointment to

<sup>1</sup> Renée.

<sup>2</sup> Vienna Correspondence. “Corres. Secrète.”

a post of some considerable importance in further recompense of his services.

Curiously enough his wife, who was very pretty, with a strong tendency to intrigue, was a sort of prototype of the unfortunate subject of our present enquiry, an original version of Madame de La Motte. She had been intimately acquainted with our Cardinal de Rohan, whom she also had led to hope she would be able to reinstate in the good graces of Marie Antoinette.

*Madame  
Goupil and  
the Cardinal.*

Madame Campan stops at this point; "the whole affair"—she says—"was hushed up, and none of the details circulated in society."

Further details, however, are to be found in the "Bastille Dévoilée," to which work her editor refers us.

*Madame  
Goupil and  
the Princesse  
de Lamballe.*

The dame Goupil, it appears, was a protégée of Madame la Princesse de Lamballe,<sup>1</sup> who had been in the habit of procuring, through her agency, copies of all the clandestine writings with which the Parisian world was inundated, and which seem to have much excited her curiosity. Madame Goupil succeeded in entirely gaining the confidence and enlisting the interest of this Princess, who contemplated getting her appointed to some place about the Court.

In this she evidently all but succeeded, since we

<sup>1</sup> This then is another protégée of Madame de Lamballe, the previous one was Madame Cahouette de Villers in 1777. See Appendix No. 6. These dates, however, cannot be trusted.



are told the Queen was on the point of nominating Madame Goupil to a post about her own person when the whole intrigue was laid bare.<sup>1</sup>

*Visit of the Duchess de Polignac to London, 1787.* Passing on to the subject of the necklace, we find the Duchess Jules de Polignac in England in 1787, accompanied by her sister-in-law, the Countess Diana. The ostensible reason assigned for this journey was to drink the Bath waters.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever may have been the motive that instigated this trip, it is clear that, during the visit of Madame de Polignac to the Duchess of Devonshire, certain negotiations were entered into with the de La Mottes, then in London, relative to the scandal of the diamond necklace. Some say the object was to recover a packet of compromising letters alleged to have been written by the Queen;<sup>3</sup> others to purchase the suppression of some Memoirs which Madame de Valois then contemplated publishing, when, we are told, "200,000 livres purchased a silence which was not kept."<sup>4</sup>

The Baron de Breteuil, it appears, had also despatched a confidential agent to treat with the de La

<sup>1</sup> "La reine veut que la femme de Goupil soit sa lectrice."

<sup>2</sup> M. de Lescure admits that this voyage seems to have had no other object than to "sonder le terrain," and ward off the threatening schemes of the pamphleteers.

<sup>3</sup> For which 4000 louis were paid through the agency of the Minister de Brienne.

<sup>4</sup> Louis Blanc. Consult also Lescure, La Motte, Georgel, Soulavie, Vizetelly.

Mottes for these Memoirs; but on the arrival of his emissary in London he learnt that the Manuscript had passed into the hands of the ex-minister Calonne; "qui s'en était constitué l'éditeur."<sup>1</sup>

*Mémoires  
Justificatifs  
1788. Lon-  
dres.*

These negotiations, whatever their character, failed in their object, since the Memoirs were published in 1789.

In 1792 Louis XVI. paid a bookseller, named Gueffier, 20,000 frs. for some subsequent Memoirs, sometimes inaccurately called a second edition of the foregoing publication. The entire work was burnt at the Sèvres Manufactory, with the usual excep-  
*Vie de  
Jeanne de  
St. Remy de  
Valois 1791.  
Londres.*

tion of a single copy retained by M. Laporte, Intendant of the Civil List, who had negotiated the purchase. There were also extant a few copies sold previously in London, and some were found in the Tuileries on the 10th August.

These 20,000 frs. also miscarried, for the work was reprinted "l'an premier de la République."<sup>2</sup>

The Count de La Motte arranged his Memoirs for publication twice—in 1825 and again in 1829.

*Mémoires du  
Comte de La  
Motte. Paris.  
1858.*

The first manuscript, which appears to have existed mostly in the form of "notes", was seized by M. Delavau, prefect of police. The second, whether seized or purchased by the Government, has only come down to us in a mutilated condition; the

<sup>1</sup> Lafont d'Aussonne.

<sup>2</sup> F. de Conches, Vizetelly, La Motte, Campan.



entire details relating to the necklace, together with many interesting and curious particulars respecting the royal family and its surroundings, have been subtracted.<sup>1</sup>

This emasculated manuscript has since been published by M. Louis Lacour.<sup>2</sup>

On his return to Paris, in 1791, the Count was granted an audience by the King, and accorded a credit on the Civil List; and at the Restoration was pensioned by Louis XVIII., with 4000 frs. in addition to 200 frs. a month from the secret funds of the Police.

M. Lafont d'Ausonne assures us there is no doubt upon this point, and that the general public was indignant at "so scandalous an instance of royal favour."

<sup>1</sup> F. de Conches, La Motte.

<sup>2</sup> It is easy to understand why so much of it was suppressed; but enough remains to judge of the verisimilitude of the manuscript which the Government dared not submit to the general public. The "notes et dépêches relatives à l'affair du Collier", found among the papers of the King on the 10 Aug., corroborate what is left of the Count's Memoirs in numerous particulars, on every point, in fact, to which they refer. See Appendices Nos. 11 and 12.

## APPENDIX II.

THERE can be no doubt Madame de La Motte supplies one of the chief motives, if not the real foundation, for the Queen's deep resentment against the Cardinal, when she traces it to his indiscretions, and the unpardonable imprudences of which he had been guilty when speaking, or writing, of the Queen to those he regarded his friends, but who retailed his inconsiderate words.

*The Queen's animosity against the Cardinal.*

He has been credited with having expressed himself to the effect that: "sa coquetterie préparait à l'amant de grandes facilités pour réussir auprès d'elle", an atrocity that came, we are told, to the ears of Marie Antoinette, and that she never forgave, as one can easily imagine.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that her mother, the ambassador Mercy and the Abbé Vermond, did their united best to prejudice her against the Cardinal, but Mercy shows that up to the death of the Empress in 1780, the Queen had never exhibited any personal animus against him. Facts may certainly have come to her knowledge after the death of her mother, but, anyhow, Besenval and Madame de Valois have furnished quite sufficient motive for any amount of malevolence and animosity the Queen might have secretly fostered, until some opportunity offered for retaliation and revenge.

<sup>1</sup> Besenval.



### APPENDIX III.

*Madame Campan.* MADAME CAMPAN, the "Faithful Waiting-Woman" (Yonge), is constantly quoted, by writers of the Conventional School, as an unquestionable authority; but her claims as such appear to be very questionable.

First, perhaps, it will be well to enquire whether this designation of "Faithful" be altogether appropriate, for it has been strongly contested.

*Her political tendencies.* One of her warmest defenders, and a thorough-going royalist, the Rt. Hon. J. Croker, writes:—It is certain Madame Campan was inclined to *liberal* opinions;—that her prejudices were all in favour of the Revolution;—that her private friends and society were also inclined to that party;—that some of her family, and particularly her brother, the once famous citizen Gênet, threw themselves, à corps perdu, into republicanism;—and that these, and other circumstances gave Madame Campan herself the reputation of being a partisan of the Revolution,—nay, of having betrayed the Queen. (Essays on the French Revolution, London 1857.)

*The Queen's mistrust.* Madame Campan undoubtedly was regarded with suspicion by her Royal Mistress, in

connection with the revelations that were continually being made of what went on at Court; her conduct was viewed with mistrust; it was more than conjectured that she secretly furnished the revolutionary party with whatever information she could pick up by means of her position near the Queen.

We gather from another royalist, M. le Baron d'Aubier, some very significant facts *Baron d'Aubier on this subject.* in connection with this subject. One of Madame Campan's most intimate friends was a certain M. Roux-Fazillac, a person upon whom the Queen had showered favours, and whom she credited with gratitude and devotion; but, after the 10th of August, he was discovered to have been "L'espion des Révolutionnaires, profitant de son intimité avec Madame Campan, et de l'indiscrétion de celle-ci." As a member of the Convention, Roux-Fazillac *subsequently voted* for the King's death.

The Baron d'Aubier only calls in question the "*discretion*" of Madame Campan; does not advance any charge of direct treachery; but he tells us:—"La reine n'avait pas une confiance aussi illimitée que Madame Campan a voulu le faire croire; je ne suis pas le seul qui l'ai dit." He gives a striking illustration of the Queen's mistrust, as follows:—

"Un jour que le Bailli de Crussol faisait à la Reine un rapport confidentiel, la Reine, apercevant Madame Campan placée à côté de la porte, et de manière à entendre, mit le doigt sur sa bouche, fit



plus d'un signe pour arrêter le récit, et expliqua ensuite comment elle redoutait l'indiscrétion de Madame Campan, dont elle avait déjà fait l'épreuve." (Observations sur les Mémoires de Madame Campan.)

*Comte de  
Courchamps,  
ditto.*

The foregoing it would appear is not the only instance on record of the Queen having cautioned people to be on their guard when Madame Campan was present. M. le Comte de Courchamps tells us that the Queen so greatly suspected the fidelity of her femme-de-chambre, that she thought it necessary to warn Madame de Créquy to be careful in her expressions when this lady, of eavesdropping proclivities, was within hearing, and he further assures us that this feeling of distrust was shared generally by the members of the Queen's household. (Consult the "Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy", par le Comte de Courchamps.)

*Lafont  
d'Aussonne,  
ditto.*

M. Lafont d'Aussonne enters more fully into the demerits of this "femme-de-chambre astucieuse et intéressée", and into the reasons why she was regarded with such suspicion. He informs us that for a long time the Queen placed entire confidence in her, until her eyes were opened to the really hypocritical character of her waiting-woman. "Parlant de son auguste maîtresse avec ses parasites et ses familiers, Madame Campan," he says, "se donnait les tons de censurer son caractère, ses démarches, et surtout sa tendre amitié pour la Duchesse de Polignac.

There is one fact in connection with this lady which is highly significant. At the time of the Restoration, when recompenses were showered upon the faithful adherents of Royalty in reward for their zeal and devotion, the services of Madame Campan remained altogether unrecognised, nay, more—negatived. “*Toutes les protestations de fidélité de Madame Campan sont venues tomber, après la Restauration, devant la persévérance avec laquelle Madame la Duchesse d’Angoulême a toujours refusé de lui accorder une seule audience.*” (Courchamps.)

*The Duchess d’Angoulême refuses to see Madame Campan.*

It is impossible to account for so persistent a refusal on the part of the Duchess to recognise the past services of her mother’s “Faithful Waiting-Woman”, except on the assumption that she really had very strong grounds for acting towards her in the way she did.

We have seen then that during the time Madame Campan was attached to the Court of Louis XVI., her prejudices, and also her intimate society, had been,—as her own partisans admit,—revolutionary. After “Thermidor” she managed to obtain an introduction to Josephine Beauharnais, who had placed both daughter and niece in her educational establishment, then at St. Germain. Through Josephine’s interest she made the acquaintance, and acquired the patronage, of Bonaparte, then a general in the Revolutionary Army, whose protégée she became, and who eventually, when Emperor,

*She and her family in high favour at the court of Napoleon.*



specially selected her for Superior of his new Educational Institution at Ecouen. "Throughout Napoleon's career, in short,"—writes Mr. Croker—"she and her family were at the height at once of Court favour and popular consideration."

*Her* Directly opposed to the well-known  
*Memoirs.* sympathies of the Author, the sincerity of her Memoirs seems questionable. The Countess de Cayla in allusion thereto, writes: "After what was told me by my father, who knew the heavy reproaches which the late Queen had addressed to that person, I was not a little surprised to see published, under the name of Madame Campan, *exculpatory* Memoirs, if I may be allowed the expression, of Marie Antoinette.<sup>1</sup> I shall remark by the way that these Memoirs have been published since the return of the Bourbons."

M. le Baron d'Aubier credits her with numerous errors, "dont plusieurs ont été commises très-volontairement." He even tells us, apropos of her critical reflections touching the King's "passivité conjugale," that others, besides himself, "sont prêts à dire que Madame Campan nous en a parlé plusieurs fois avec détail d'une manière très-différente, même opposée."

Her Memoirs therefore do not correspond either with her sentiments or her more intimate conversations.

*Admission of* Even M. Lescure regards her authority  
*M. Lescure.* as "assez contestable sur plus d'un point."

<sup>1</sup> "Private Memoirs of the Court of Louis XVIII.," by a Lady. London 1830.

Carlyle says that, in her narrative (of the *Of Carlyle.* necklace) and in her Memoirs generally, she does not seem to *intend* falsehood; but that she has no notion of historical rigour etc., and “requires to be read with scepticism everywhere.”

“Nous ne croyons pas,” writes M. de *Of M. Viel-* Viel-Castel, while quoting her as authority— *Castel.*

“qu’elle ait rempli, près de Marie Antoinette, un rôle aussi important qu’elle se plaît à le décrire.”

“Il me serait facile”—writes M. Michelet *Opinion of* —“de relever les erreurs innombrables, *Michelet.* volontaires ou involontaires, de Georgel et de Madame Campan.”

The foregoing opinions and direct accusations, abundantly show that we are justified in regarding Madame Campan with considerable mistrust, and that any statements advanced by her, cannot be accepted as conclusive, unless corroborated, and should undoubtedly be rejected when at variance with the corresponding versions of other writers, or when inconsistent with the teachings of common sense and experience.



#### APPENDIX IV.

*Vizetelly's  
further sug-  
gestions in  
denial of the  
intimacy  
considered.*

A STRONG point has been made that there were no direct charges brought against the Queen, when on her trial in 1793, relative to this intimacy "with so abandoned a woman."<sup>1</sup>

The Attorney-General—it is advanced—had not far to go for evidence. There was the Count de La Motte himself; there was the Count d'Estaing, who knew both the Queen and the Countess; there were Renée Sévin, the under femme-de-chambre, and Reine Millot, another old servant:—"Bonne citoyenne, excellente patriote," a witness "only too eager to repeat all the scandal current at Versailles respecting the Countess de La Motte and the Queen."

It was not, however, idle scandal that was needed, but evidence; and of those named, the only one who could have directly spoken to the point was the Count de La Motte, then residing at Bar-Sur-Aube, and he had been already sounded on the subject, in 1789, by the Orleans faction. Many inducements were then held out to persuade him and his wife to give evidence against the Queen, to join, according

<sup>1</sup> Vizetelly.

to the jargon of the day,—“la meute qui doit attaquer la louve Autrichienne.”

The attempt failed. The wary Count thought that his interests lay rather on the side of the King. As for Madame de La Motte, she could not be persuaded, by any promises, to quit the safe retreat she had found in London, and risk her neck a second time.

Further endeavours, with a similar object, were made subsequently, but the cautious La Motte was not to be caught. He refused to move in so hazardous an undertaking.

The details of these attempts are given, at some length, in the Count's Memoirs. M. de Conches writes to the same effect, and so do MM. de Goncourt.

There can be no doubt, in short, that a plot had existed to bring forward the Count and his wife as witnesses against the Queen;—that certain direct overtures were more than once made with that object, but without satisfactory results;—that eventually the design was abandoned.

Without the de La Mottes, they were unable to carry out their plot.



## APPENDIX V.

*The two  
reputed offers  
of the Neck-  
lace to the  
Queen.*

IT has been stated that the Necklace had been already twice offered by the King for acceptance by Marie Antoinette and declined.

The chief authorities in support of this story appear to be Madame Campan and Mlle. Bertin, or whoever wrote her presumed Memoirs; but on comparing the accounts given by these two ladies, we perceive that, though both say they were present on the second occasion, they strangely differ in their versions of what occurred. This throws a little discredit on their evidence.

Louis XVI. was by nature parsimonious, economical to an excessive degree—"économie indigne d'un Roi, qui abaissait la personne royale";<sup>1</sup> he had, but two years previously, been obliged to take over a debt the Queen had incurred for jewelry, amounting to some 300,000 frs., a debt that was not yet discharged; the finances were utterly disorganised. It seems certainly strange, and rather difficult to believe, that, under these circumstances, he should have twice volunteered an outlay of nearly two millions for an object of mere

<sup>1</sup> MM. de Goncourt.

fantasy for the Queen, while at the same time discountenancing and lamenting "*le goût qu'elle avait pour les diamants.*"

Even M. Vizetelly doubts this story of the refusal. "Was it natural," he asks, "in one so young and handsome? Was it consistent? Was it indeed sincere?"

We altogether doubt the circumstance having ever occurred. Such could never have escaped either Count Mercy's observation or comments. He, who seized every opportunity of singing the praises of his rather refractory young pupil, would undoubtedly, when writing to the Empress, have made a good deal of so unwonted a trait of self-abnegation on the part of the Queen.

But the Vienna Correspondence does not contain any allusion to the subject.



## APPENDIX VI.

*Madame de Villers.* MADAME CAMPAN mentions a previous occasion, in 1777,<sup>1</sup> when the Princess de Lamballe had interested herself in another "intrigante," a certain Madame Cahonette de Villers. This lady whose character, we are told, would not stand the least investigation, had a rage for palming herself off, among her friends, for a person in favour at Court, and had formed the design of gaining access to the Queen.

The Count Beugnot informs us that Madame de Villers not only contemplated, but succeeded in gaining admission to Marie Antoinette, and obtained "quelques grâces de son inépuisable bonté." This position she was subsequently convicted of abusing.

The account given in the "Bastille Dévoilée" admits of no doubt regarding the Queen's temporary interest in this lady. When informed of the abuse that had been made of her confidence, she condoned the offence with a simple reprimand. A similar offence having been repeated, Madame de Villers was lodged in the Bastille, the fact being carefully kept from the knowledge of the Queen lest she should again insist, as

<sup>1</sup> Madame Campan is not much to be depended on in her dates.

she had on the previous occasion, on Madame Cahonette not being punished. Her detention lasted about five months.

In the "Corres. Sec." it is recorded that this lady: "a su s'impatroniser auprès de notre jeune reine, et obtenir même sa confiance pour différentes petites affaires secrètes."

"Elle a été, depuis peu, chargée d'un emprunt qui devait être tenu très-secret; mais, la prudence ayant apparemment manquée à la négociatrice, le nom de la reine s'est trouvé compromis."

"Ne croyez rien de tout ce qu'on vous dira."

The caution is significant of how the real facts were suppressed.



## APPENDIX VII.

THE following extract from the "Memoirs of the Sanson Family" (vol. I, p. 197), relative to the execution of the sentence on Madame de Valois, gives a very graphic description of the scenes that occurred; it is written by the grandson of Charles Henri Sanson, the then functionary of "haute justice."

"Precautions were taken which showed how much they feared the cries of the victim, her protestations or outbursts of fury. They fixed on an early hour, 6 o'clock, that there might be few people present.

"On rusa avec elle. Elle eut été un lion qu'on aurait mis moins d'adresse à le prendre.

"L'arrêt, cruellement impudique disait qu'elle serait fouettée *nue*.

"L'exécution donna lieu aux scènes les plus hideuses.

"M. de Fleury, the procureur, sent for the executioner and informed him that Madame de La Motte had shewn great violence of manner during her incarceration, and that it was to be feared she would resist. He requested him to arrange the execution of the sentence so as to avoid scandal. A magistrate, who was present, suggested that Madame de La Motte should be gagged, like M. de Lally; but Charles Henri Sanson objected, reminding

him that the compassion which had been evinced for the old general would be more widely felt and expressed if a woman were subjected to the same violence. It was eventually decided that the execution should take place in the court of the Conciergerie. Charles Henri Sanson asked the procureur to entrust to him the management of this unpleasant affair, in which judgment was far more necessary than strength.

"He began by obtaining information concerning Madame de La Motte's habits, and he heard from the gaoler that she was on very friendly terms with his wife, who attended her in the prison. Following the instruction of the executioner, this woman entered the prisoner's room and told her that she was wanted outside. Madame de La Motte was in bed; she turned her face towards the wall, and said that she was sleepy, and could not rise so early. The goaler's wife then told her that it was her counsel who wished to speak with her. This effectually roused Madame de La Motte, who jumped out of bed and lost no time in dressing. As she was leaving the room, one of my grandfather's assistants, who was behind the door, seized her arm and thrust it under his; another assistant did the same on the other side; but Madame de La Motte, displaying such strength as could hardly have been expected from a woman, shook away their grasp and retreated towards the door. Charles Henri, however, had come forward, and was standing against it. Madame de La Motte stopped and looked at him



with glistening eyes. 'She was,' writes my Grandfather, 'rather small in stature, but extremely well made. Her countenance was sufficiently pleasant to conceal for a time the irregularity of her features; her expressive physiognomy was full of charm, and it was only after minute examination that one discovered that her nose was very sharp, that her expressive mouth was large, and that her eyes were somewhat small. What was remarkable in her was the thickness and length of her hair, and also the whiteness of her skin, and the smallness of her hands and feet. She wore a silk *déshabillé*, striped brown and white, and covered with small nosegays of roses. Her head-dress was an embroidered cap. While she was eyeing Charles Henri as if about to leap at him, the other assistants and four police officers surrounded her. She perceived that resistance was useless, and, speaking to my grandfather, who had taken off his hat: 'What do you want with me?' she said.

"'We wish you to listen to your judgment, Madame,' answered the executioner.

"Madame de La Motte shuddered; she clenched her hands, looked down, and then raising her head: 'Very well,' she said. The two assistants who had at first tried to secure her, came forward; but she motioned them away and advanced before them.

"When the procession reached the hall, where a parliamentary committee was sitting, the clerk read out the judgment.

"At the very first words which proclaimed her guilt, the strongest emotion appeared on Madame de La Motte's face. Her eyes rolled in their sockets; she bit her lips, and the hitherto pretty face now seemed to be the mask of a fury.

"Charles Henri foresaw a storm, and approached her; and it was well that he did so, for, as the clerk came to the penalties, the unhappy woman's rage burst out with extraordinary violence. She fell backwards so suddenly that her head must have been fractured on the stones had not my grandfather caught her in his arms.

"It was impossible to finish the reading of the sentence. Madame de La Motte's strength increased as the consciousness of her fate flushed through her mind, and a protracted struggle ensued between her and the assistants who attempted to pinion her.

"She was at length carried down to the court. The scaffold was erected opposite the gate, which had been left open. But it was six o'clock in the morning, and only a limited number of persons were looking on. She was stretched on the platform and received twelve stripes. She never ceased shrieking while the punishment was being inflicted. She invoked vengeance on the head of the Cardinal de Rohan; and she added that it was her own fault that she had suffered the disgrace which had been inflicted on her, since, had she said but one word, she would have been hanged instead of having been flogged.



"The second part of the sentence had no doubt escaped her, for when she was seated on the platform she remained motionless, as if completely subdued and powerless. Charles Henri Sanson thought the moment was well chosen for the completion of the penalty. Her dress had been torn, and her shoulder was bare; he took an iron from the grate and applied it to her skin. Madame de La Motte uttered a wild shriek, and, writhing in the grasp of the assistants who were holding her, she bit his hand with such fury that she took a piece of flesh off. She struggled again, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the iron could be applied to the other shoulder.

"Justice was now satisfied. Madame de La Motte was put into a fly and taken to the Salpêtrière. As she was alighting she tried to rush under the wheels, and a few moments afterwards she thrust the sheet of her bed into her throat in a frenzied attempt to choke herself.<sup>1</sup>

"Her imprisonment lasted ten months. She escaped, some said, through the connivance of the Government, in fear of the revelations which M. de La Motte threatened to make unless his wife were released."

<sup>1</sup> Besenval says the same.

## APPENDIX VIII.

MADAME D'ANDLAU'S ideas of education *Madame*  
seem to have borne fruit. We read in the *d'Andlau.*

"Corres. secrète entre Marie Thérèse et le Comte de Mercy Argenteau", published by Arneth, the following:

"Les propos défavorables à Mesdames avaient fait le tour de l'Europe. Étonnée de les voir persister à Vienne, Marie Thérèse en écrivit au Comte de Mercy pour savoir le vrai. Le Comte ne cacha pas à sa souveraine qu'une tendresse plus que fraternelle aurait existé, disait-on, entre le feu dauphin et Adelaïde, et qu'ensuite cette princesse aurait eu du goût pour l'évêque de Senlis, premier aumônier de Louis XV.

"Madame Victoire passait pour avoir eu un enfant de son père."

Mercy here gives simply the general "on dit".



## APPENDIX IX.

*The Comtesse  
d'Artois.*

SOULAVIE refers to the "lovers" of Madame d'Artois and particularly to an assignation, publicly witnessed, with a Garde-du-Corps. This "liaison" is corroborated by an ultra-royalist authority; for M. Lafont d'Ausonne tells us that, during the prolonged absence of her husband in camp before Gibraltar (1783—4), the Countess gave birth to a princess who was named Marie, and whose father was "un très-beau Garde-du-Corps, Barrières des Granges."

In the "Bastille Dévoilée" we read: "il a été mis à la Bastille pour un intrigue de Cour qui a fait beaucoup de bruit à Paris dans le temps, et que tout le monde connaît. L'on a eu toute sorte d'égards pour ce prisonnier... il a été visité plusieurs fois par M. le Noir, alors lieutenant-de-police, et par le Baron de Breteuil lui-même. Lors de la sortie il a été exilé à Saint Dominique, où on lui a donné un emploi très-lucratif."

## APPENDIX X.

THERE is a circumstance in connection with the Queen and one of the "Seigneurs honorés de ses bontés", as Madame Campan would put it, rather difficult to account for. *"Le beau Fersen."*

The name of the Count de Fersen, "le beau Fersen," who was so singularly distinguished by Marie Antoinette, does not appear in the Vienna Correspondence, which yet embraces the period of his extraordinary favour. This omission is all the more curious since M. Geffroy, one of the Editors, had already shown, in his work, "Gustave III. et la Cour de France," that the favour enjoyed by the Count was really extreme, and a subject of much comment; that he was received at all the "cercles intimes," a similar admission accorded to the Count de Stedingk being looked upon as a blind, simply to cover the much-desired presence of his friend Fersen. Meetings were spoken of and prolonged conversation at the "bals d'Opera"; eloquent glances and looks said to have been exchanged at the "soirées intimes," when conversation was found impracticable. Further, the Swedish Ambassador at Paris, the Count de Creutz, wrote confidentially to his Sovereign, Gustave III., to the



effect that there was very good foundation for all these comments.

The historical importance of the following letter cannot be ignored. It is the communication of an eye-witness thoroughly conversant with the facts he confides to his sovereign.

*Letter of Comte de Fersen to Gustave III.* "Je dois confier à V.M. que le jeune Comte de Fersen a été si bien vu de la reine que cela a donné des ombrages à plusieurs personnes. J'avoue que je ne puis pas m'empêcher de croire qu'elle avait du penchant pour lui; j'en ai vu des indices trop sûrs pour en douter. Le jeune Comte de Fersen a eu dans cette occasion une conduite admirable par sa modesté et par sa réserve, et surtout par le part qu'il a pris d'aller en Amérique. En s'éloignant, il écartait tous les dangers; mais il fallait évidemment une fermité au-dessus de son âge pour surmonter cette séduction.

"La reine ne pouvait pas le quitter des yeux les derniers jours; en le regardant, ils étaient remplis de larmes.

"Je supplie V.M. d'en garder le secret pour elle, et pour le sénateur Fersen."

It is impossible to imagine that Count Mercy was ignorant of this "penchant" and the public comments to which it gave rise, therefore we must conclude either that he designedly withheld the fact from the knowledge of the Empress, or else that a portion of the Correspondence has been designedly suppressed.

Madame Campan, during the period of her favour at the Court of Napoleon, acknowledged to him, and also to Talleyrand, that Fersen was in the Queen's boudoir at Versailles during the night of the 5th and 6th Oct. when the Palace was stormed by the populace. He escaped observation with considerable difficulty, while Marie Antoinette fled for shelter to the King's apartments.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See O'Meara; also "Lord Holland's Foreign Reminiscences."



## APPENDIX XI.

### NOTES.

#### SUR LE COMTE DE LA MOTHE.<sup>1</sup>

##### I.

M. DE LA MOTHE reçut deux coups d'épée en arrivant à Londres: il se retira à Lancastre où il fut empoisonné pendant le procès à Paris. Découvert par M. de Vergennes qui écrit à M. Adhemard, de le faire enlever, on envoya des gens de la police à cet effet: Surbois était leur capitaine, un nommé Corta, chargé de diriger le complot, avait reçu mille guinées, sa femme, cent louis, et s'il réussissait, il devait recevoir dix mille autres guinées. La crainte d'être pendu, l'arrêta. Il dévoila tout à M. d'Adhemard. L'affaire manquée, La Mothe va chez M. d'Adhemard, accompagné de deux valets, et lui assure qu'il est l'ennemi du cardinal. M. d'Adhemard lui dit: "Je suis aussi du parti de la reine; le roi a renvoyé la connaissance de cette affaire au parlement et a jugé le cardinal coupable; il faut donc qu'il soit

<sup>1</sup> Trouvé, dans le comité de sûreté générale, parmi les papiers du roi, apportés, dans la salle par le peuple, le 10 août.

jugé tel; et les Rohans, luttant contre les Bourbons, doivent être anéantis... Allez à Paris, inculpez le cardinal, constituez-vous prisonnier pour vingt-quatre heures. Vous aurez des protecteurs et des conseils; je vais faire partir mon secrétaire."

L'affaire jugée, M. d'Adhemard dit à M. de La Mothe que le cardinal avait bien été jugé pour l'affaire du collier, mais qu'il ne s'en tirerait pas aussi bien des plaintes que le procureur-général allait rendre contre ses propos contre la reine.

Il lui dit quelques jours après, que la reine se contentait d'ôter aux Rohans ses charges, et d'envoyer le cardinal à la Chaise-Dieu, qu'il devait être persuadé que la reine empêcherait l'exécution du jugement.

La Mothe écrivit à M. de Vergennes pour le blâmer; il lui mandait qu'il serait bientôt hors de place. Et Calonne a assuré M. le Comte de La Mothe, qu'il avait été empoisonné par la reine, qu'il avait été appelé, lui Calonne, par le mourant, qui l'avait chargé d'en parler au roi.

## II.

Le Comte de La Mothe voyant le cardinal de Rohan siéger à l'assemblée nationale, écrivit à l'assemblée qu'il allait se constituer prisonnier pour la cassation de son procès.

Le fer et le poison, dit-il, m'ont suivi dans une terre étrangère. Je les ai retrouvés jusques dans les



montagnes d'Ecosse où j'avais été chercher ma retraite. C'est là, qu'apprenant le système insidieux de défense qu'on avait fait prendre à ma femme, j'écrivis à son prétendu défenseur que j'allais me rendre à la Bastille ; mais comme on redoutait ma présence, on mit tout en usage pour l'empêcher. Un ministre dont on a vanté la politique, un ambassadeur vendu à mes ennemis, m'ont abusé par de fausses négociations, jusqu'à ce qu'on ait prononcé l'infâme arrêt qui m'a flétri, moi absent, et demandant d'être entendu, et mon épouse innocente. On a eu le secret de la faire paraître coupable.

## III.

M. de Mirabeau se donna les plus grands soins pour obtenir au moins la lecture des papiers du Comte de La Mothe ; il lui conseillait de faire le plus grand éclat contre Marie Antoinette.

Le Comte de La Mothe en rendit compte à M. de Montmorin, qui l'engagea à approfondir cette intrigue.

Lorsqu'il fut décidé que Mirabeau ne serait pas ministre, il parla au Comte de La Mothe un autre langage. Il lui dit que *Monsieur l'avait chargé de faire des propositions avantageuses pour éviter un éclat.*

C'était une nouvelle intrigue de Mirabeau ; il voulait absolument avoir les papiers de La Mothe, mais il ne les eut pas.

LETTRE DE M. DE LA MOTHE À M. DE MONTMORIN,  
DU 22 SEPTEMBRE, 1790.<sup>1</sup>

“J’ai toujours ignoré, j’ignore encore le noeud de la funeste intrigue qui a fait passer dans mes mains les lambeaux d’un collier acheté par M. le Cardinal de Rohan, pour S. M. la reine. Je sais qu’il est prouvé que le prélat a bien réellement reçu le collier *dans son intégrité*, et qu’il ne l’a jamais été qu’il l’ait remis en cet état à mon épouse. Je sais encore que ce n’est point elle qui a signé *Marie Antoinette de France*. Il me paraît absurde de supposer que le grand aumônier ait pu se persuader que Marie-Antoinette d’Autriche signât comme l’auraient fait les tantes ou les sœurs du roi.

“Ma femme a donc été égarée, et l’instrument du crime du cardinal. Les dons que j’ai reçus et dont j’ai acquis des propriétés, venaient des présents faits par la reine.

“Il a été prouvé au procès, que les jouailliers ont remis au cardinal le collier dans son intégrité.

“L’a-t-il été que ce prélat ait remis ces bijoux entre les mains de mon épouse, en cet état?

“Madame de La Mothe n’a reçu des fragments du collier que les pièces marquantes et dont la trace pouvait être suivie. Mon épouse m’a donné ces pièces que j’ai vendues, en m’assurant que c’était un présent de la reine. Le cadeau était brillant; mais c’était la

<sup>1</sup> See “Mémoires historiques.” par Soulavie.



filles des Césars qui l'offrait au seul reste des Valois dont l'héritage, la première couronne de l'Europe, brillait sur la tête de la reine.

“L'épisode de Mademoiselle d'Oliva me parut moins naturelle. Le cardinal était instruit du rôle qu'elle allait jouer. Ce que cette comédie avait d'extraordinaire s'évanouissait—à mes yeux—devant une suite de faits qui me paraissaient certains. Lorsque je témoignais quelque curiosité, on me fermait la bouche, en me disant *la reine le veut. C'est votre bienfaitrice. Respectez ses moindres désirs.* C'était le cardinal, c'était mon épouse qui me parlaient ainsi; et qui n'en eût pas fait autant à ma place?

“Je voulais voler à la défense de mon épouse. M. d'Adhemard connaît toutes les intrigues que M. de Vergennes a employées pour m'empêcher de faire cette démarche.”

## APPENDIX XII.

THE original edition of these Memoirs is dated, on the title page, "Londres 1788," and consists of 232 pages with "pièces justificatives" of 46 pages. It was printed in the de La Motte's house, and exhibits the typographical errors of a private press. Each copy is signed by Madame de La Motte herself, on page 232:—"*Comtesse de Valois de La Motte,*" under the date, "*Londres, le 1 janvier, 1789.*" There was a second edition of these Memoirs, with a few alterations and additions. It is dated, "*Londres, le 1 juin, 1789,*" and also signed, though in a different form, by Madame de La Motte herself:—"*Jeanne de St. Remy de Valois, Comtesse de La Motte.*"

There were numerous subsequent editions printed, but not signed, or even published by the de La Mottes. The original English version is dated London 1789, and contains, in addition, a "prefatory address," which only appeared in some of the later French editions. The English edition is similarly signed by Madame de La Motte, on page 261.

Madame de La Motte tells us that, in preparing these Memoirs for publication, she availed herself of



the assistance of an "homme de lettres", M. Latour, recommended to her by the ex-Minister Calonne, who it would appear personally superintended the entire publication, and made considerable additions and corrections in the original manuscript. This is evidently the manuscript, "corrigé de la main même de M. de Calonne," that Madame Campan states she saw in the hands of the Queen, and which M. Lafont d'Aussonne tells us was entrusted by the Queen to the Vicomtesse de Fontanges on the eve of the tenth of August:—"pour le lui conserver jusqu'à des temps meilleures." 137/2.

Madame de La Motte gives us some curious details relative to the composition of these Memoirs and the intrigues of Calonne, in a pamphlet, now very difficult to meet with, which she issued in London, just previous to their publication, entitled:—"An address to the public explaining the motives which have hitherto delayed the publication of the Memoirs of the Countess de Valois de La Motte, etc." The Memoirs, it seems, were commenced in January 1788.

"I had"—she writes—"laying (sic) by me many sketches, foul copies and unconnected papers; out of which, for want of practice, it was difficult for me to form one connected whole, fit to be presented to the Queen. I made M. de Latour privy to my embarrassment, requesting him to assist me, which he complacently assented to. Collecting what he could from those papers I had written, revising what my husband

had also committed to writing, but chiefly following what was personally dictated to him, sometimes by one, sometimes by the other, M. de Latour completed that production, which I shall entitle '*Memoirs written by Myself*', confessing, however, as I now previously do, that it was not without the help of a *colourist*, nay, it will presently be seen, that I may say of *colourists*, for M. de Calonne was pleased to supply me with some of the deepest and strongest tints that appear in my picture."

The foregoing gives a natural and presumably correct relation of the manner in which the manuscript was compiled. What share each may have taken in its composition is a matter of minor importance, and does not in any way affect its authenticity. Madame de La Motte signed every copy and published the work as her defence, protesting at the same time, against all that may have been put into her mouth by counsel either in memoirs, or otherwise, and what she may have herself urged in her defence before the judges at her trial, inasmuch as then she was not a free agent or permitted to publish or speak the truth.

The Count, in his own Memoirs, gives further particulars about the Calonne manœuvres, the composition of the justificatory Memoir, and the overtures made for their suppression through the Polignacs, and, subsequently, through the French ambassador, M. le Marquis de la Lazerne, on behalf of the Minister Lomenie de Brienne.



The two accounts are essentially the same; on one point, however, they directly contradict each other.

Madame de La Motte says the original manuscript, the one corrected by Calonne, was handed over to him by her husband, and remained in his possession.

The Count, on the contrary, says he gave the original manuscript to M. de Lazerne, on his reopening negotiations with M. Necker, who had then succeeded to the ministry.

The original manuscript certainly appears to have found its way to Paris, and into the Queen's possession, which would hardly have been the case had it fallen into Calonne's keeping.

La Motte and his wife entertained widely different views regarding the object of the Memoirs. He was always anxious to negotiate, not to publish, provided that, by delivering up the manuscript, he could only secure some comfortable provision for the future, in the shape of a suitable pension. Mme. de Valois was hot upon publication, actuated by a spirit of revenge:—"La Reine," disait-elle, "ne devait pas la sacrifier":—one "qui s'était dévouée pour elle." "Her exasperation was such"—writes the Count,—"that I had the greatest difficulty in the world to make her listen to reason or practice the slightest patience."

Madame de Valois and her husband, therefore, were at variance in their views on this point; the one influenced by feelings of revenge, the other by motives of expediency. M. Lafont d'Aussonne writes:—"l'Am-

bassadeur de France parvint à s'emparer du manuscrit," and as Madame de Valois was not an actual witness to the presumed delivery of the manuscript to Calonne, has indeed only her husband's word to that effect,—evidence not of much value, especially when he subsequently confesses to having given it to M. Lazerne,—it is evident that the Count told his wife a lie, and privately disposed of the manuscript to the French ambassador.

M. F. de Conches furnishes us with the following particulars as to the origin of this work. In 1825 the Count de La Motte presented himself before M. de Lavau, Prefect of Police, "demander du pain." M. Duplessis, Head of his Office, suggested the idea that he should write some Memoirs on the affair of the Necklace:—"La Motte écrivit donc et avec toutes les apparences d'une parfaite bonne foi."

*Mémoires du  
Comte de La  
Motte, 1858.*

"Pendant qu'il vivait du pain de la police, et qu'il rédigeait des notes au vrai, pour M. de Lavau, cet homme conservait des Mémoires prolixes, découverts depuis et publiés par M. Louis Lacour. La Motte y retombe, comme jadis, dans le crime de la calomnie."

The suggestion to write came then, it appears, from the police. The Count says, that not only the first propositions came from the police, but that they sent to him direct, and M. Lafont d'Aussonne says the same. Anyhow, one can easily imagine the nature of the Memoirs the authorities thought to extract from the needy,



the indigent Count, and the question naturally arises here:—What have become of these original “notes au vrai”? Why have they never seen the light? Were they not sufficiently exculpatory?

M. F. de Conches continues:—“Although the Queen’s memory had no need of white-washing, still it was not the less precious to have an authentic denial written by one of the principal actors in this too-famous drama; an old man, worn down by misfortune, but retaining all his intelligence, understanding the character of the atonement, and accepting it, according to the opinion of M. Duplessis, with resignation and good faith, “comme sans bassesse”. Why, then, have they not published this “authentic denial”? However “precious” it may be to have obtained such a denial, its value is entirely dependent on its publicity. The Government, however, has never thought fit to give the public any opportunity of judging of its value, and we may draw our own conclusions.

It is clearly evident that the Count could not be persuaded to write in the way the police hoped, so they shut up his mouth with a secret pension. He tells us in his Memoirs, he never doubted that the intention of the Government was, after having appropriated these “notes” in the way they did, to arrange them, after his death, in such a way as to perpetuate the false ideas, and ignorance of the public, upon this mysterious affair; and it was to prevent the publication of “un tissu de faussetés comme les aveux et les con-

fidences du Comte de La Motte" that he set to work to recompose his Memoirs.

We gather some further information from M. Lafont d'Aussonne, who had an opportunity of "interviewing" the Count in 1829, when he was living with his niece Madame de Latour, Rue des Camettes 17, the same year he was arranging his Memoirs the second time for publication. "Addressing him"—characteristically writes this author—"addressing him with an air of authority '*qui me le soumit promptement*' (!), I called upon him to humbly acknowledge that he and his wife had calumniated the Queen and invented the whole intrigue of the necklace, etc." He then proceeds to give the "grands aveux" that the Count is represented as making in regard to his wife's Memoirs. Admitting the interview to be correctly retailed, it shows that the Count must have thrown a considerable amount of dust into the eyes of the interviewer,—a contingency, of course, only to have been expected, but which M. Lafont does not appear in the least to have suspected. De La Motte, as a matter of fact, confessed nothing beyond what we are already acquainted with:—that the ex-Minister Calonne had had a very large share in compiling the manuscript, by which he rather hoped to make some political capital. Not the slightest admission was extracted from the Count that his wife's version of the intrigue was not true.

Respecting M. Louis Lacour's publication of the Count's Memoirs, M. de la Sicoitière writes:—"Le



manuscrit sur lequel il a été imprimé, et qui fait aujourd'hui partie de ma bibliothèque, n'est pas même autographe comme l'annonçait le titre, mais seulement certifié et approuvé par le Comte de La Motte." This implies a most unmerited reflection on the publishers, for in the preface or introduction is the following announcement:—"Nous pouvons garantir que les Mémoires ont été imprimés d'après une copie authentiquée par lui, et d'après des cahiers de sa composition autographe originale que nous avons en double, et où nous avons recueilli plusieurs variantes."—*Superch. Litt. Dévoilés*, Paris, 1870.

There exists a "carton" consisting of 6 pages, which it is almost impossible to meet with, only 8 impressions having been struck off. The copy of the work in the Author's possession—one of the two that were printed on China paper—contains this "carton", which treats on the subject of the reputed gallantries of the Queen.

Soulavie '75/VI' publishes some "notes et dépêches" relative to the diamond necklace, which were found among the papers of the king taken on the 10th Aug. These documents corroborate the Memoirs of the Count in numerous particulars.

